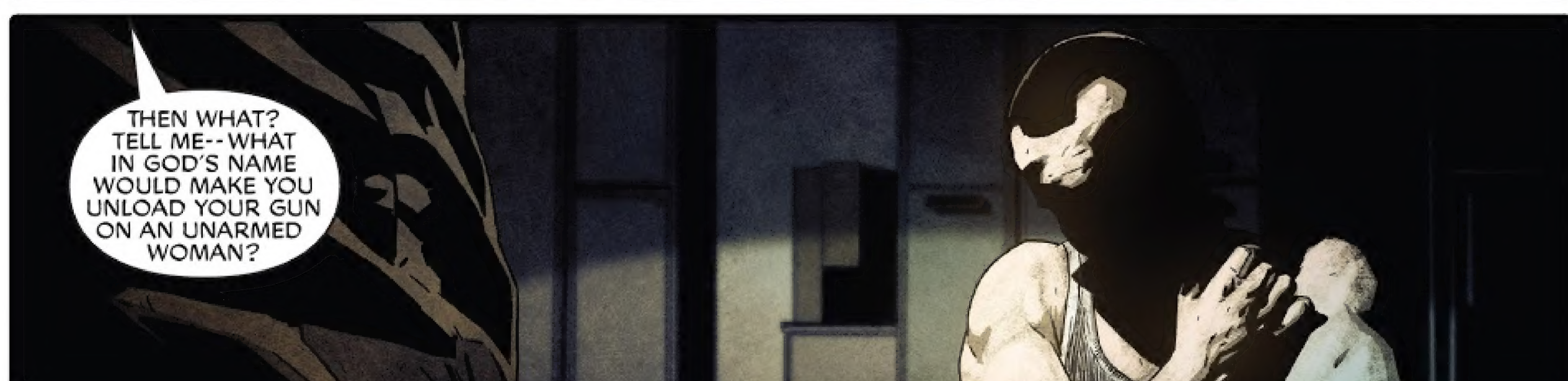
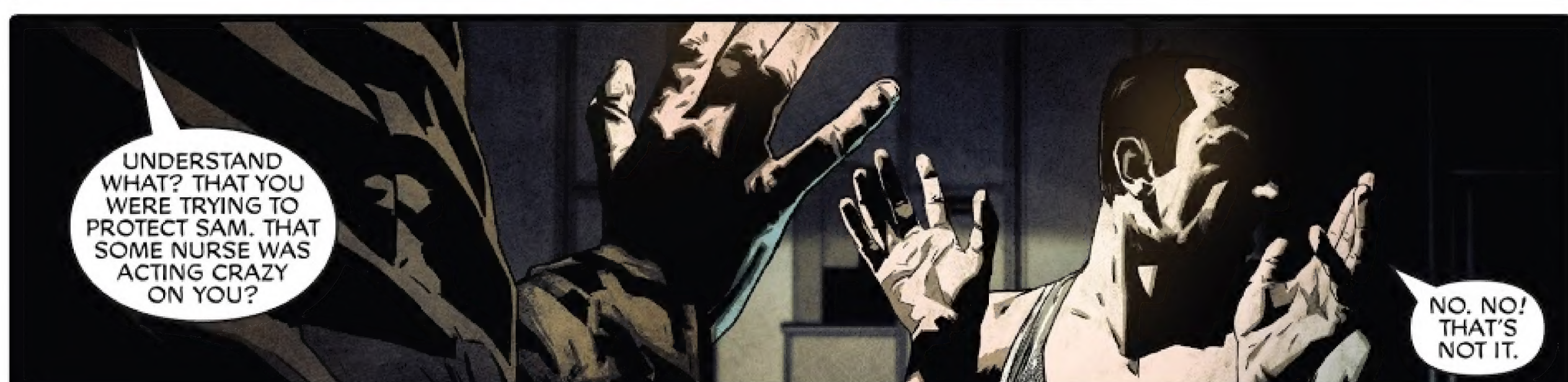
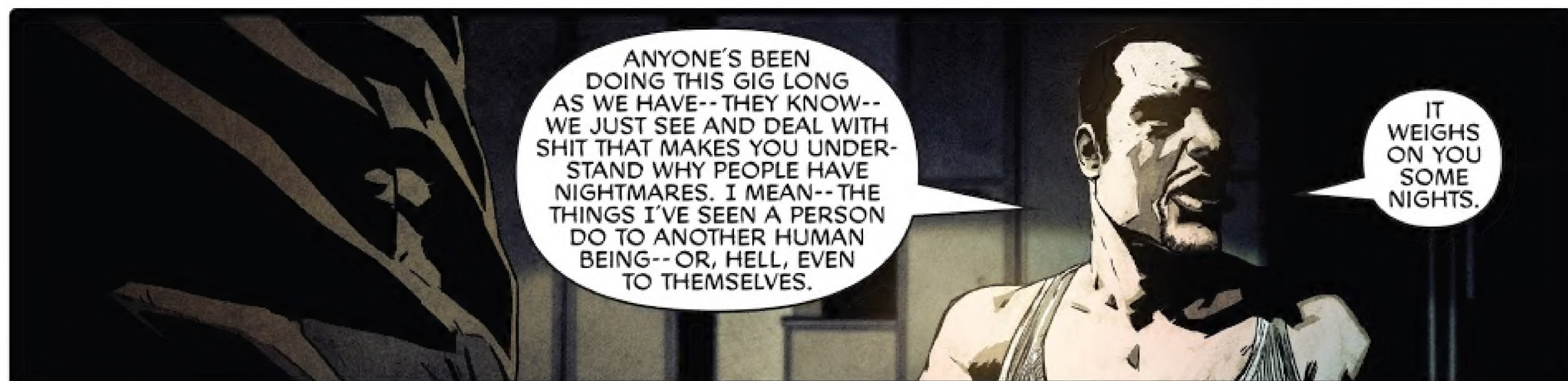


image
210
DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN



Golden





MY
INSTINCTS!

DO YOU KNOW
HOW MANY YEARS
I'VE PUT INTO THIS
CAREER? HOW MUCH
TIME I'VE SPENT CHASING
DOWN THE F@*KING DREGS
OF SOCIETY--PUTTING MY
LIFE ON THE LINE-- SO THE
COURTS CAN SLAP THEM
ON THE WRIST AND LET
'EM DO IT ALL OVER
AGAIN?

EVEN WORSE?
THEY SOMEHOW
ALL FIND A DATE. THEN
EVENTUALLY PROCREATE.
BRINGING A BUNCH OF
KIDS INTO AN ENVIRONMENT
THAT THEY'LL NEVER
HAVE A CHANCE OF
ESCAPING.

I'M
MISSING
YOUR
POINT.

NO YOU'RE
NOT... YOU'VE
DONE THE SAME
THING. THE ONLY WAY
WE'VE SURVIVED THIS
LONG IS BECAUSE OF OUR
INSTINCTS! THEY TELL US
WHEN WE SHOULD
CHARGE IN AND WHEN
WE SHOULD HOLD
BACK OR BE
SUSPICIOUS.

WELL,
THAT'S WHAT
HAPPENED AT THE
HOSPITAL.

EVERY FIBER
IN MY BODY WAS
SCREAMING-- "**SOME-
THING'S NOT RIGHT!**" THAT
**SOMETHING WAS MESSSED
UP!** SO NOW I'M SITTING HERE
WAITING FOR OTHERS TO
DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH MY
CAREER BECAUSE IF I TELL
THEM THE TRUTH, THEY'LL
TAKE MY BADGE AWAY
IN A SECOND!

SO--
WHERE'S
THAT LEAVE
ME?

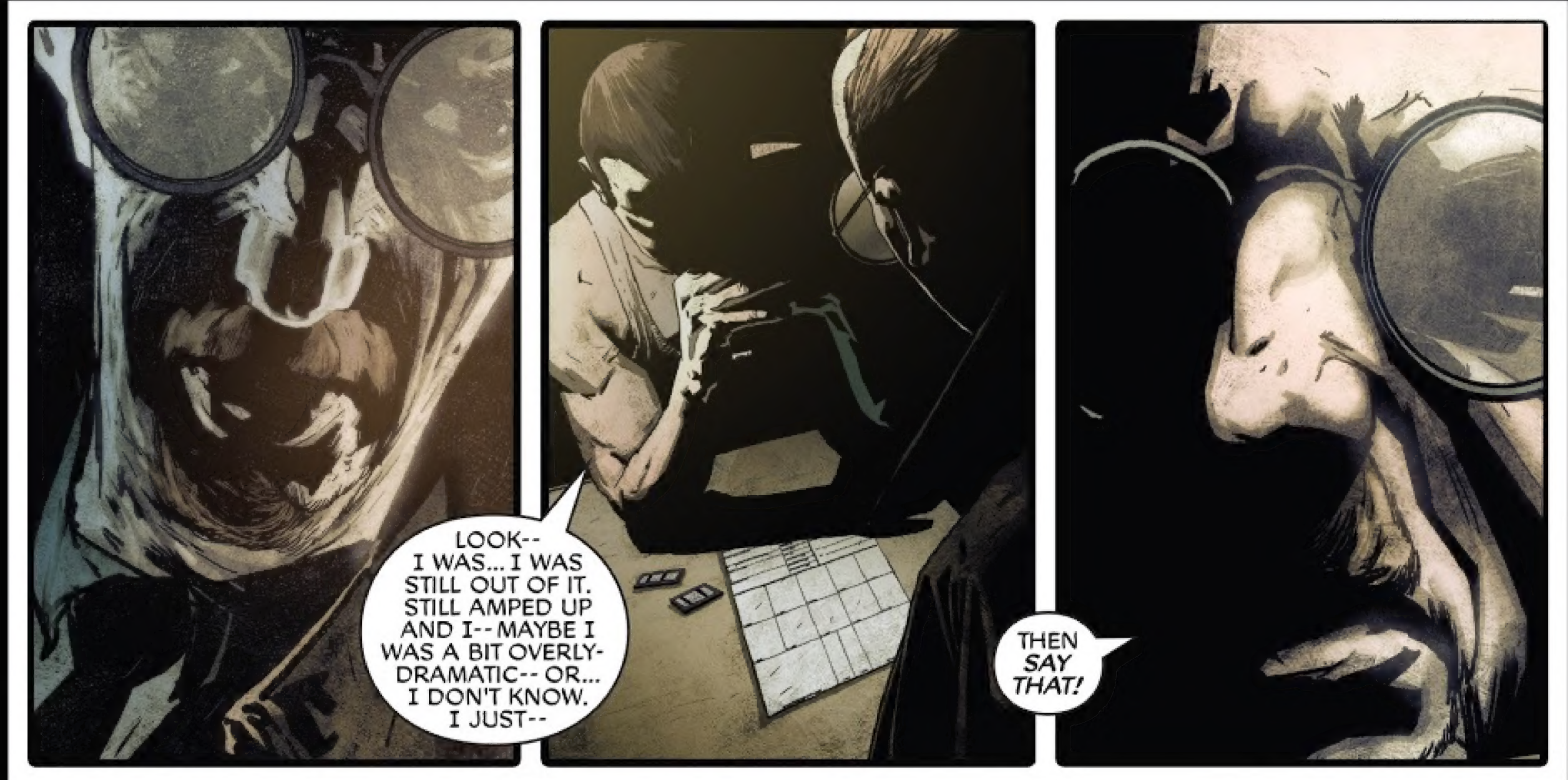


HERE'S HOW YOU SOLVE IT--

YOU LIE.

YOU'RE GOING TO TELL THEM THAT YOU MISSPOKE. I'VE READ THE INITIAL REPORT, DETECTIVE ROWAND-- THE WRITE UP OF YOUR STATEMENTS TO THE FIRST RESPONDING OFFICER. IN IT YOU MENTION-- AND I'M QUOTING HERE-- "SHE WASN'T HUMAN."

DO YOU KNOW HOW THAT SOUNDS-- "WASN'T HUMAN?"



LOOK-- I WAS... I WAS STILL OUT OF IT. STILL AMPED UP AND I-- MAYBE I WAS A BIT OVERLY-DRAMATIC-- OR... I DON'T KNOW. I JUST--

THEN SAY THAT!

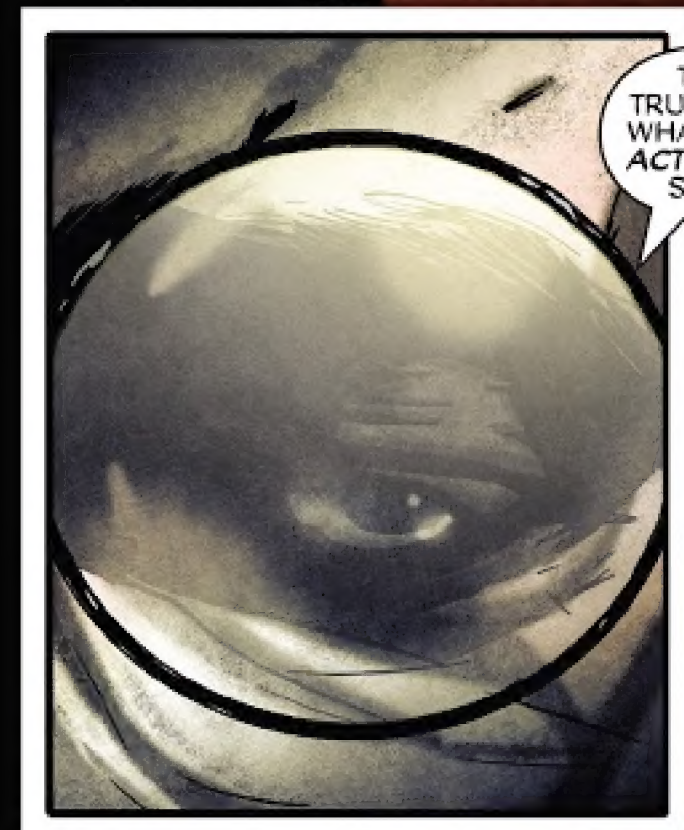


KEEP TELLING THEM YOU WERE RUNNING ON ADRENALINE. THAT "SHE WASN'T HUMAN" MEANS "OUT OF HER MIND." AND THAT "SHE ALTERED HER BODY" MEANT "SHE WAS INDESCRIBABLY VIOLENT." DEFINE YOUR STATEMENTS IN WAYS THEY'LL UNDERSTAND.

BECAUSE RIGHT NOW THE PRELIMINARY BLOODWORK ON THE DEAD HOSPITAL WORKERS AND NURSE'S CORPSE SEEMS TO BACK UP YOUR STORY. IF IT HOLDS UP YOU SHOULD BE IN THE CLEAR WITH REGARDS TO ANY WRONG-DOING IN THE STAFF MURDERS-- WHICH IS THE BIGGER ISSUE AT PLAY HERE. THERE'LL BE CONSEQUENCES FOR YOUR ACTIONS BUT AT LEAST TRY AND MINIMIZE THE DAMAGE TO YOUR CAREER.

SO TELL THEM WHAT THEY WANT TO HEAR.

AND WHAT ABOUT YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT?



THE TRUTH, OF WHAT YOU ACTUALLY SAW.

THE NURSE-- AFTER SHE JUMPED ME, SHE RAN DOWN THE HALL TO THE STAIRWELL. LIKE SOME BROKEN WIND-UP TOY. AND BEFORE YOU SAY IT, IT WASN'T BECAUSE SHE WAS SHOT. SHE WAS-- I DON'T KNOW HOW TO EXPLAIN IT, BUT SHE MOVED LIKE A HUMAN CRAB OR SOMETHING.

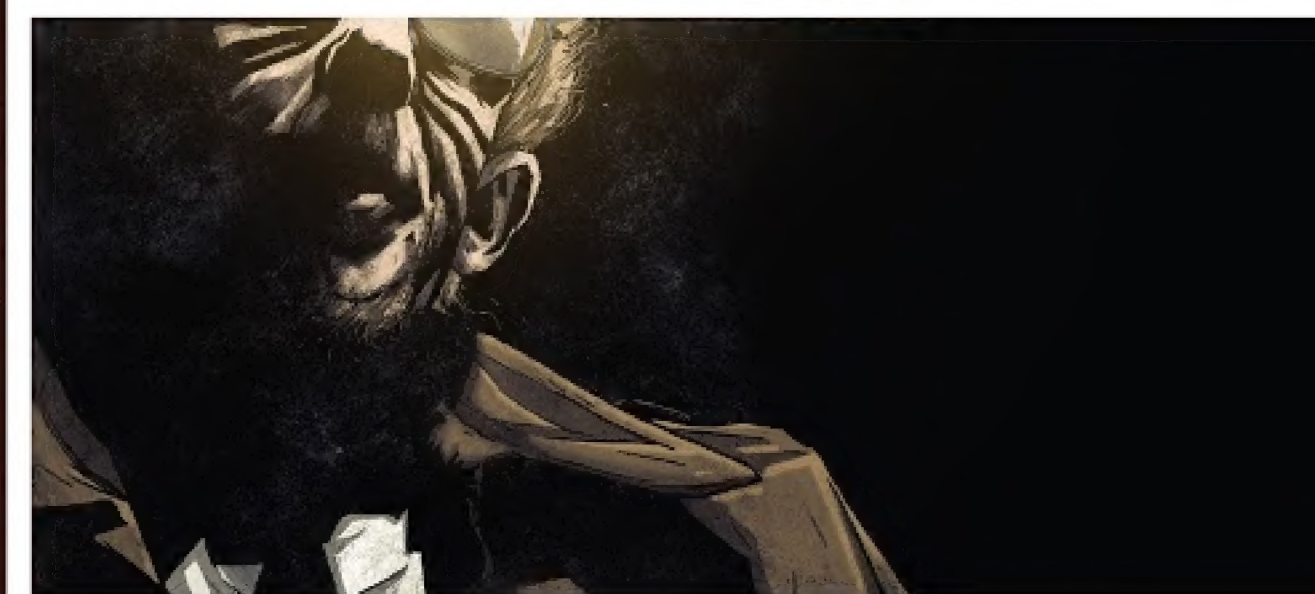
BY THE TIME I GOT TO THE ROOF SHE SEEMED NORMAL. THEN JUST BEFORE SHE JUMPED HER FACE CHANGED. I WAS TELLING MYSELF THAT IT WAS JUST THE SITUATION, THAT THE LIGHTS WERE PLAYING TRICKS ON ME.

THEN SHE JUMPED.

I KNOW IT WAS DARK AND SHE WAS TWISTING IN HER FALL. BUT...

BUT I SWEAR, FOR JUST A HEARTBEAT, I SAW SOMETHING. AND WHEN I DID-- AND THIS IS GOING TO SOUND CRAZY-- I COULD FEEL EVIL.

AT MY VERY CORE I FELT IT.



I BELIEVE YOU.

WHAT? WHY? IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.



BECAUSE I'VE FELT IT TOO.



"AND THOUGH MOST PEOPLE THINK
IT'S JUST THE STRESS IN THEIR LIFE, OR
THEIR OVERACTIVE IMAGINATION IN
THE DEAD OF THE NIGHT-- IT DOESN'T
MEAN THE EVIL ISN'T THERE.

"OR THAT A *BOOGEYMAN*
DOESN'T ACTUALLY EXIST."





*it's not
working.*



*something's...
wrong...*







JESUS
CHRIST!

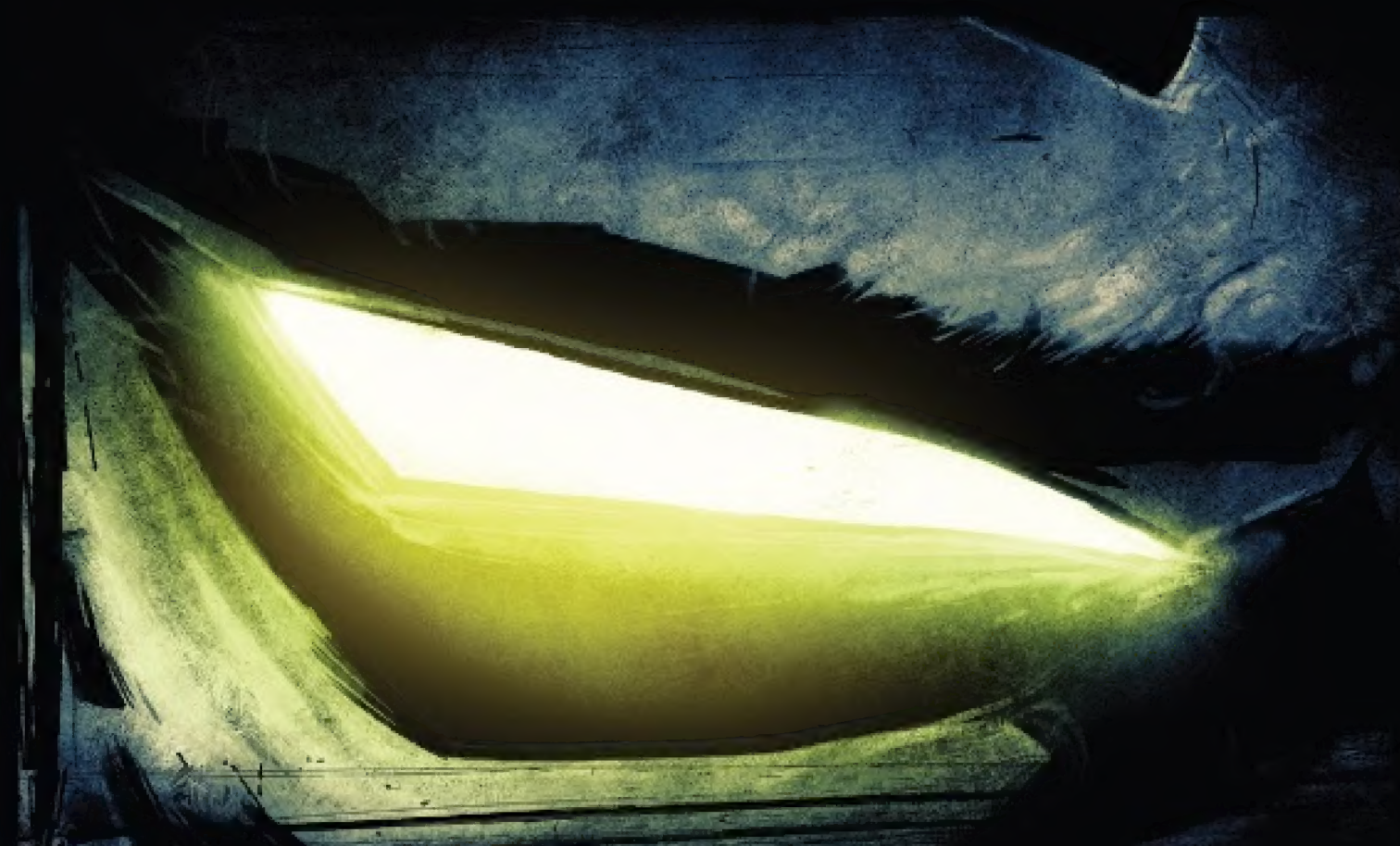
STOP
FIGHTING
ME!



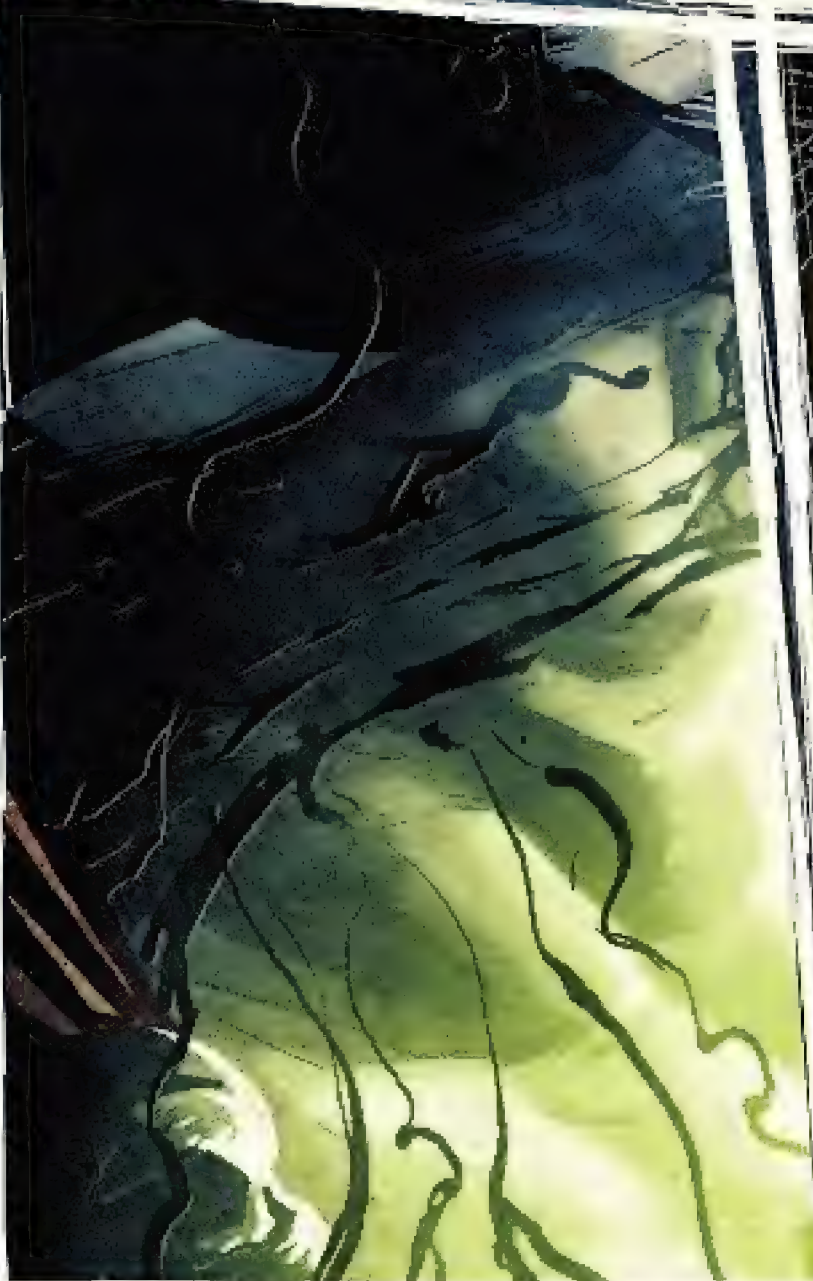
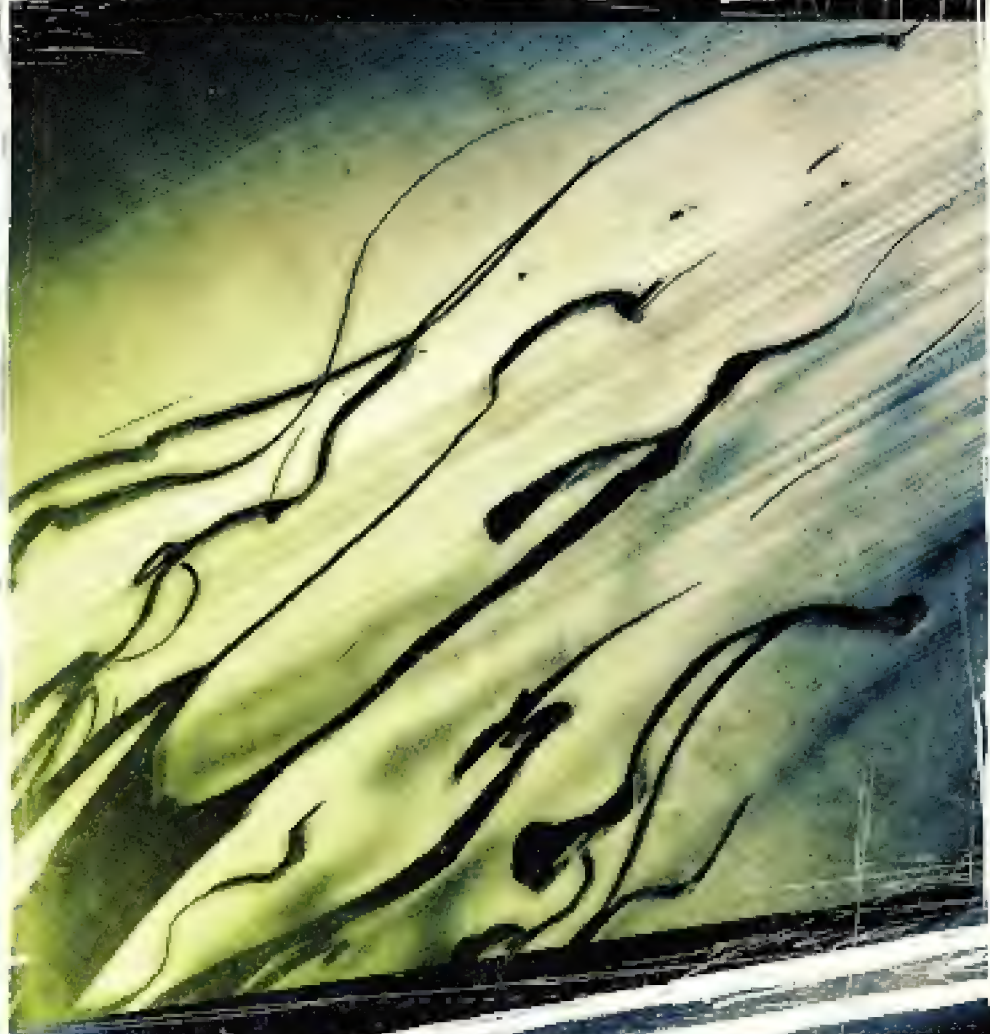
SOMEHOW,
MY SUIT--
IT REACTED
TO SAM.



AS IF IT
WAS PULLING
BACK FROM
HIM.



LIKE IT
WAS
AFRAID.



THIS IS...



CRAZY!!

I'M...
IN...

CONTROL!

**NOT
YOU!!!**



I DON'T
WANT THIS
ANY-
MORE!

The top section of the page contains three vertical panels. Each panel shows a close-up of a character's face, which appears to be screaming or in pain. The face is surrounded by a bright, yellow-green energy field with jagged, lightning-like patterns. The character's eyes are closed, and their mouth is wide open. The panels are separated by thin black lines.



NOW GO
AWAY!

The bottom section of the page is a large, full-page panel. It shows a close-up of the same character's face, still surrounded by the bright, yellow-green energy field. The character's mouth is wide open, and their eyes are closed. The energy field is more intense and widespread than in the top panels. The panel is framed by a thick black border.





DID YOU SEE HOW
CONFUSED HE WAS? HE'S
FIGHTING THE SYMBIOTE
LIKE HE STILL DOESN'T
KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING
TO HIM.

THAT'S THE SECOND
TIME WE'VE SEEN THAT. CLOWN
SAID THIS WOULD HAPPEN.
THE QUESTION IS, DO WE LET
ANYONE KNOW?

WHO YOU
TALKING ABOUT?
CLOWN OR
BLUDD?

BOTH OF THEM. AT
LEAST ONE OF THEM IS GOING
TO EXPECT SOME TYPE OF FEED-
BACK, THOUGH I'M NOT INCLINED TO
LET THEM KNOW WE HAD TO
REGENERATE OURSELVES.

YOU THINK
SPAWN KNOWS WE'RE
MISSING?

HE'LL FIND OUT
SOON ENOUGH. I'M MORE
INTRIGUED BY HIS CURRENT
WEAKNESSES. THOSE CAN
BE EXPLOITED.

AND
WHAT OF
OUR BROTHER?
ARE WE JUST
GOING TO LEAVE
HIM TO ROT IN THE
DARKNESS
WHERE SPAWN
DRAGGED
HIM?

THE SHADOWS
AREN'T OUR REALM.
YOU KNOW THIS— AND
YOU ALSO KNOW OF THE
DANGER THAT WAITS ON
THE OTHER SIDE OF
THE LIGHT.

WE'LL
WAIT— AND
HOPE THE SPAWN
LEAVES US A
CRACK WE CAN
OPEN.



WHY'RE YOU DOING THIS, TWITCH?

DOING WHAT?

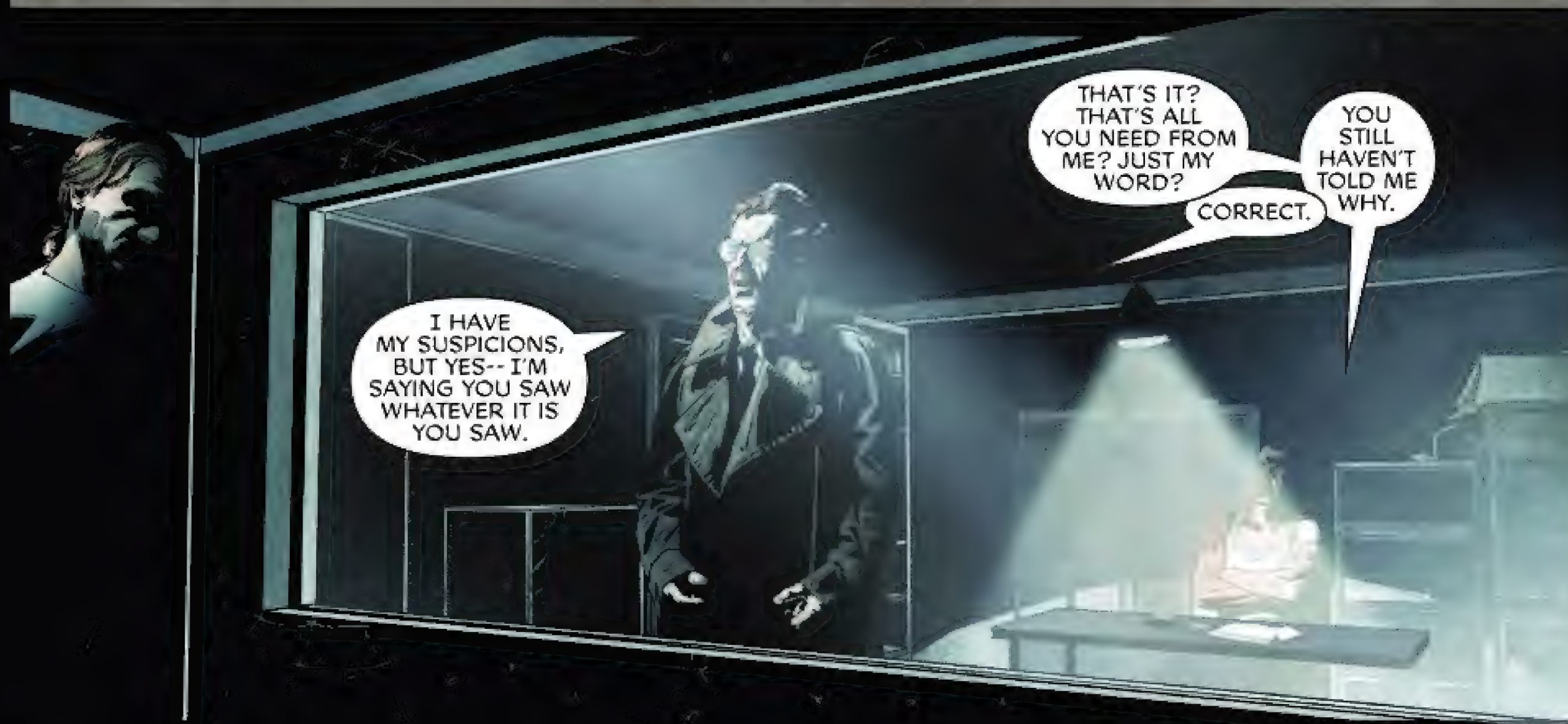


TRYING TO SAVE ME. TRYING TO CONVINCE ME I'M NOT CRAZY. WHY?



BECAUSE YOU SAID YOU SAW "SOMETHING." AND THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME.

DESPITE THE FACT YOU DON'T HAVE ANY ACTUAL CLUE WHAT I SAW?



I HAVE MY SUSPICIONS, BUT YES-- I'M SAYING YOU SAW WHATEVER IT IS YOU SAW.

THAT'S IT? THAT'S ALL YOU NEED FROM ME? JUST MY WORD?

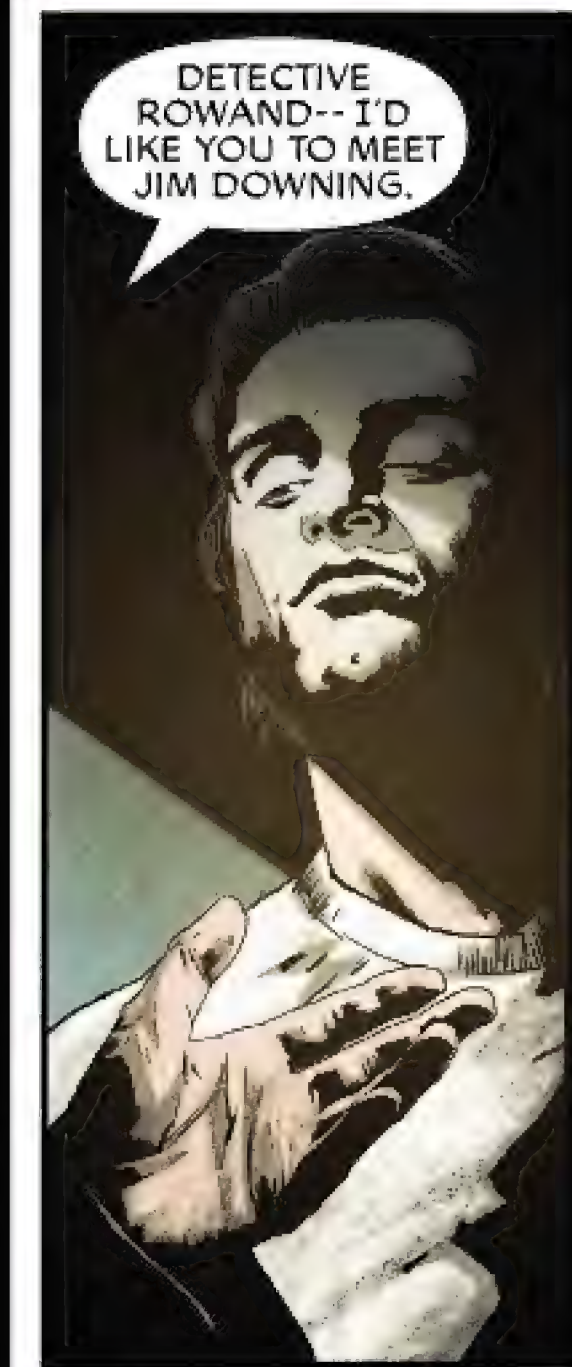
CORRECT.

YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ME WHY.



BECAUSE I'VE BEEN IN YOUR SHOES AND I'M NOT GOING TO LET THE "SOMETHING," WHATEVER IT WAS, RUIN YOUR CAREER-- OR YOUR LIFE.

SO I'M WILLING TO HELP YOU FROM LOSING BOTH OF THOSE.





I HADN'T
HEARD HE'D
TURNED HIM-
SELF IN.

I HAVEN'T.

I'M HERE
TO SEE
TWITCH.



THIS IS
BULLSHIT!

HE SHOULDN'T
BE HERE! NOT NOW!
NOT WHEN I'VE GOT
MOST OF NEW YORK
LOOKING TO FRY MY ASS.
THE LAST THING I NEED
IS TO BE ACCUSED OF
HARBORING SOMEONE
WHO'S WANTED FOR
QUESTIONING.

I THOUGHT
YOU WERE
BETTER THAN
THIS, TWITCH.

HE
SAID HE'D
HELP SAM.

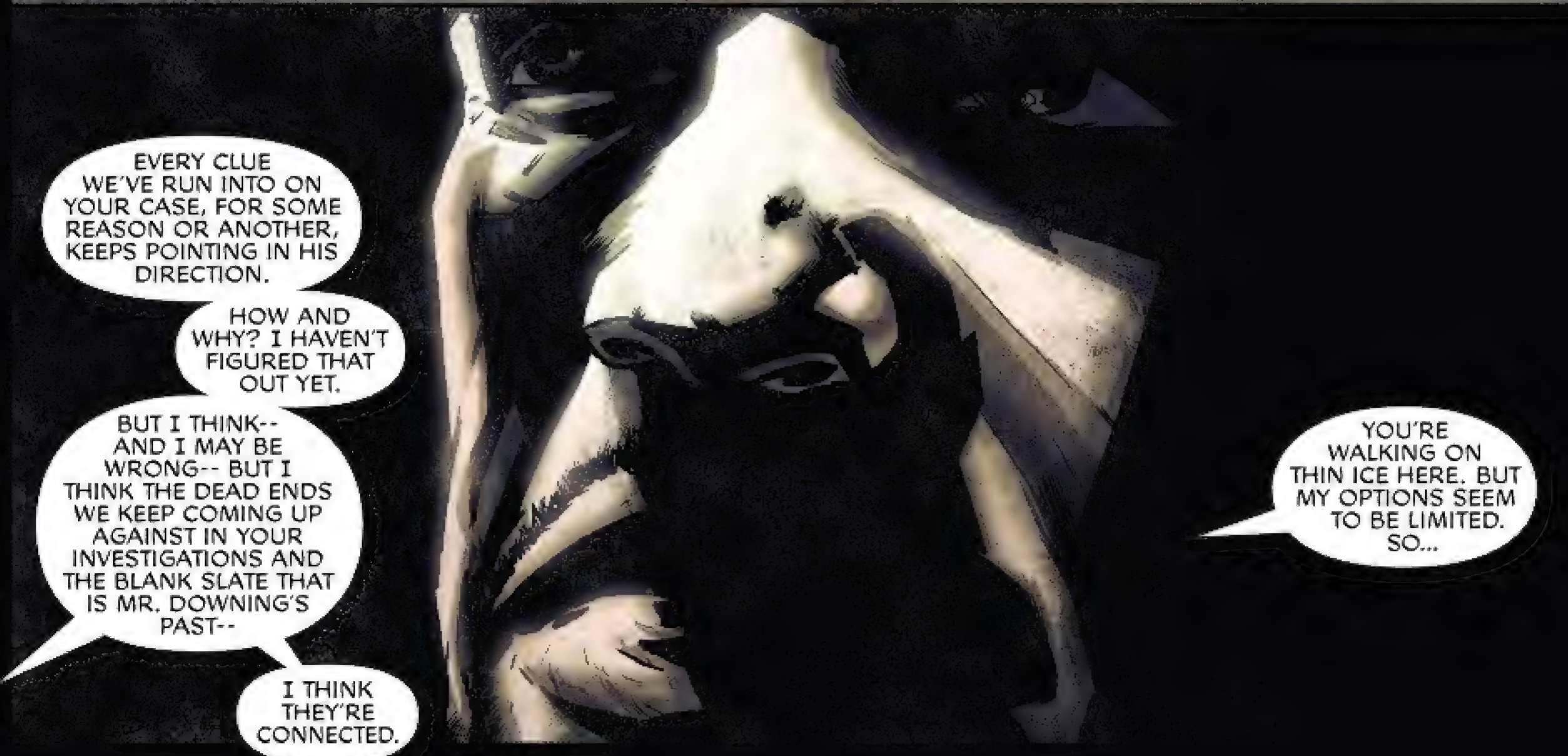
WITH HIS...
POWERS. YOU
SAW IT ON TV.
IN RETURN
I PROMISED TO
HELP HIM.



WE
NEED TO
TALK ABOUT
THAT.

NOT NOW.
I'M TRYING TO
SAVE THE GOOD
DETECTIVE HERE--
FROM
HIMSELF.

SO, AM
I BENDING THE
LAW HERE A LITTLE?
YES! HERE'S WHY-- JIM'S
LOOKING FOR HIS PAST
AND YOU CAME TO NEW
YORK TRYING TO SOLVE
A CASE. FAR AS I CAN
TELL, THEY'RE
RELATED.



EVERY CLUE
WE'VE RUN INTO ON
YOUR CASE, FOR SOME
REASON OR ANOTHER,
KEEPS POINTING IN HIS
DIRECTION.

HOW AND
WHY? I HAVEN'T
FIGURED THAT
OUT YET.

BUT I THINK--
AND I MAY BE
WRONG-- BUT I
THINK THE DEAD ENDS
WE KEEP COMING UP
AGAINST IN YOUR
INVESTIGATIONS AND
THE BLANK SLATE THAT
IS MR. DOWNING'S
PAST--

I THINK
THEY'RE
CONNECTED.

YOU'RE
WALKING ON
THIN ICE HERE. BUT
MY OPTIONS SEEM
TO BE LIMITED.
SO...



YOU'VE
GOT MY
ATTENTION.

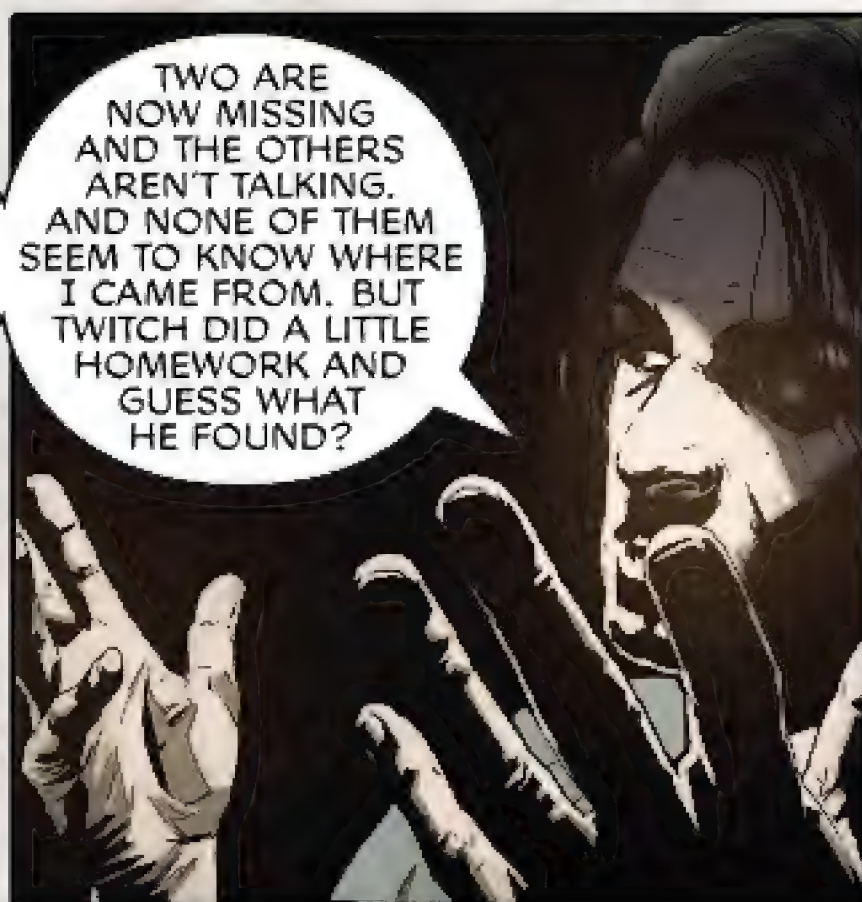


YOUR CASE
HAS A CONNECTION
TO ST. ANTHONY'S
AND A HALF DOZEN
ADMINISTRATORS
FROM THERE BEFORE
THE FIRE.*

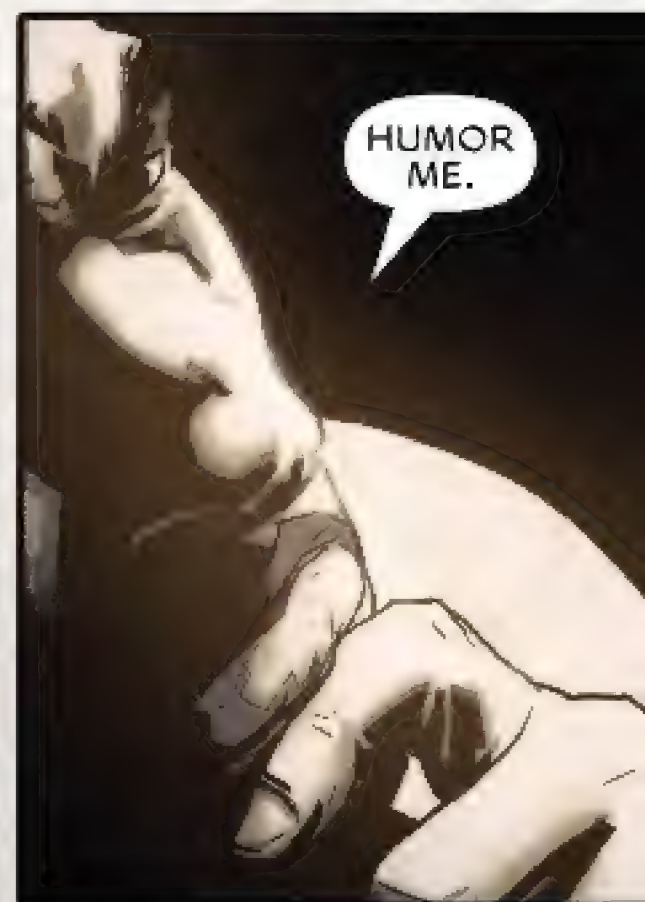
*Issue 187-- Todd



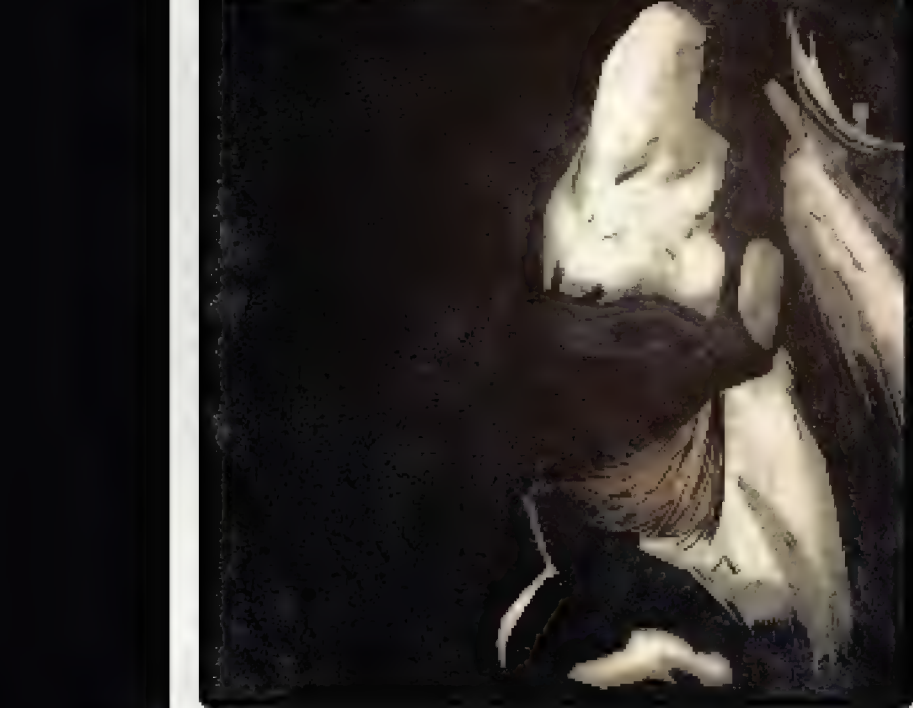
THOSE
SAME PEOPLE
WERE THE ONES
RESPONSIBLE FOR
DIRECT OVERSIGHT
OF ME DURING
MY COMA.



TWO ARE
NOW MISSING
AND THE OTHERS
AREN'T TALKING.
AND NONE OF THEM
SEEM TO KNOW WHERE
I CAME FROM. BUT
TWITCH DID A LITTLE
HOMEWORK AND
GUESS WHAT
HE FOUND?



HUMOR
ME.



APPLICANT

CONTRIBUTOR ADDRESS

LEAVE THIS SPACE BLANK

ENCE OF PERSON FINGERPRINTED.
OR PRINT ALL REQUESTED DATA
ENCE OF PERSON FINGERPRINTED

NUMBER
DATE FINGERPRINTED
PLACE OF BIRTH
CITIZENSHIP

4. RIGHT RING

3. RIGHT MIDDLE

2. RIGHT INDEX

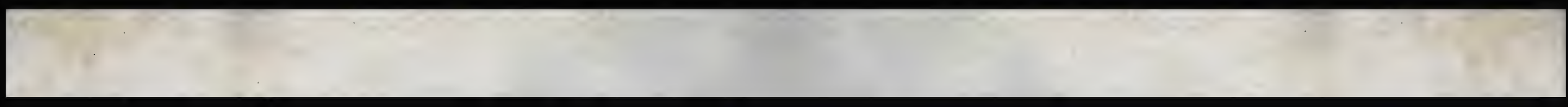
1. RIGHT THUMB

8. LEFT MIDDLE

9. LEFT RING

YOUR
SUICIDE VICTIM,
BACK IN LANGLEY, SHOT
HIMSELF LESS THAN THIRTY
MINUTES AFTER JIM AWOKE
FROM HIS COMA. THIRTY
MINUTES! AND AS YOU
KNOW, THE LAST CALL HE
MADE WAS TO ONE OF
THE PARTNERS OF
ST. ANTHONY'S.

JIM WAKES.
YOUR GUY DIES.
AND ST. ANTHONY'S
BURNS TO THE
GROUND. IT'S TIME WE
SEWED ALL OF THOSE
TOGETHER.



"IT'S TIME WE FIND OUT WHO
JIM DOWNING REALLY IS!"

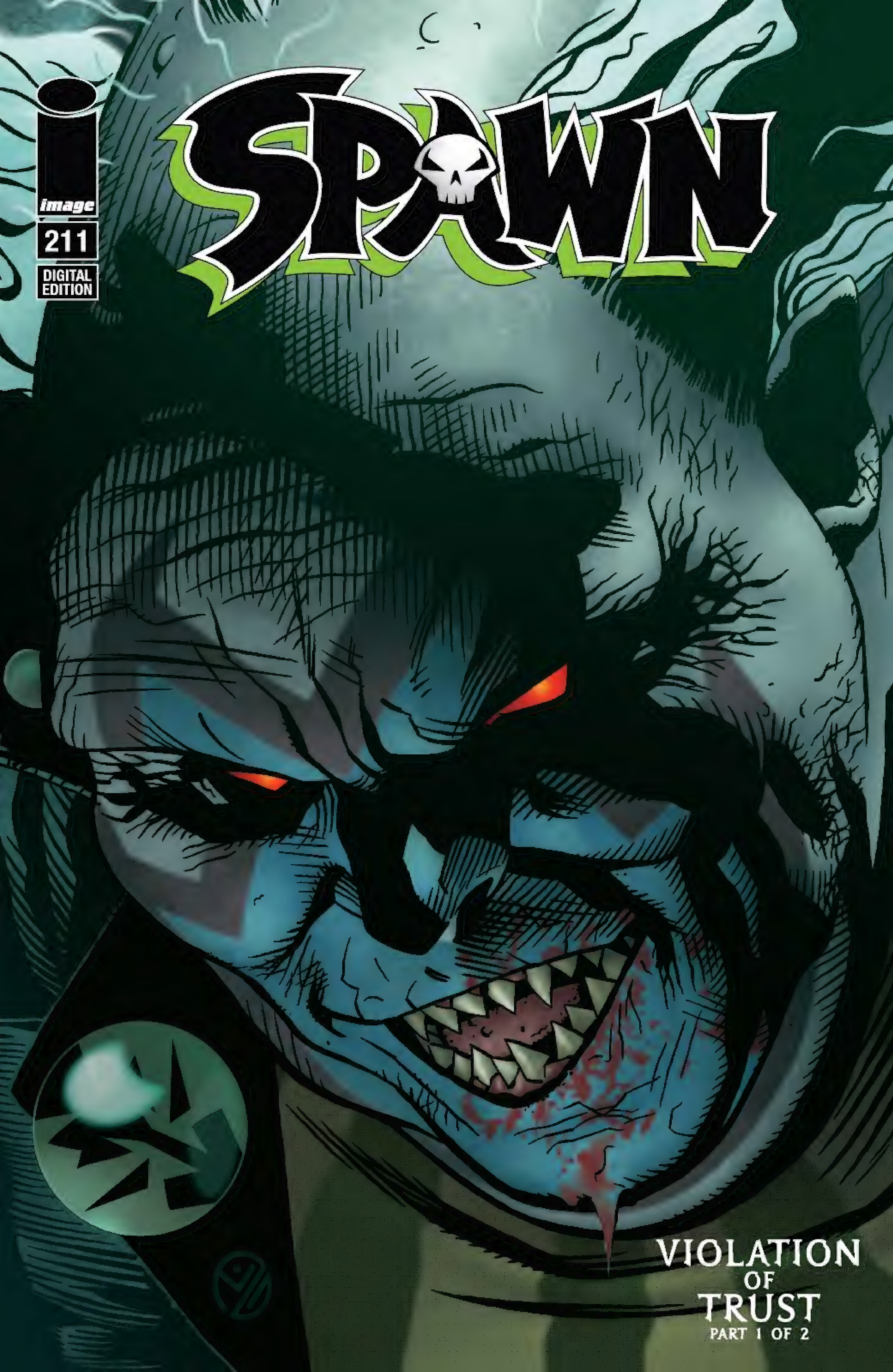




211

DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN



**VIOLATION
OF
TRUST**
PART 1 OF 2



HERE'S THE QUESTION WE NEED TO ASK OURSELVES-- AND NEVER MIND THE ANSWER-- THE QUESTION, IN AND OF ITSELF, IS REASON ENOUGH FOR CONCERN--

WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW IS-- WHY, IF YOU'VE BEEN INTERVIEWED BY VARIOUS POLICE AGENCIES ALREADY, HAS THERE BEEN NO RETURN ON ANY OF THE DETAILS YOU'VE GIVEN, OR THE FINGERPRINTS YOU SUPPLIED?

YOU TELL ME.

I CAN'T. THAT'S THE PROBLEM.

I CHECKED YOUR FILE IN THE SYSTEM-- GUESS WHAT COMES UP?

JACKSHIT?

SO TO SPEAK-- YEAH.

IT'S ALL BLOCKED. I CAN FIND YOUR NAME AND A CASE NUMBER, BUT THE REST-- IT'S BLACKED OUT. YOUR PRINTS. YOUR WRITE-UPS AND PERSONAL INFO. ALL OF IT.



IN FACT, I HAD TO DIG JUST TO FIND IT. WAS FILED UNDER "JOHN DOE," WITH "JIM DOWNING" LISTED AS YOUR ALIAS. DOESN'T THAT SEEM ODD TO YOU?

YOU'RE THE DETECTIVE. YOU TELL ME.



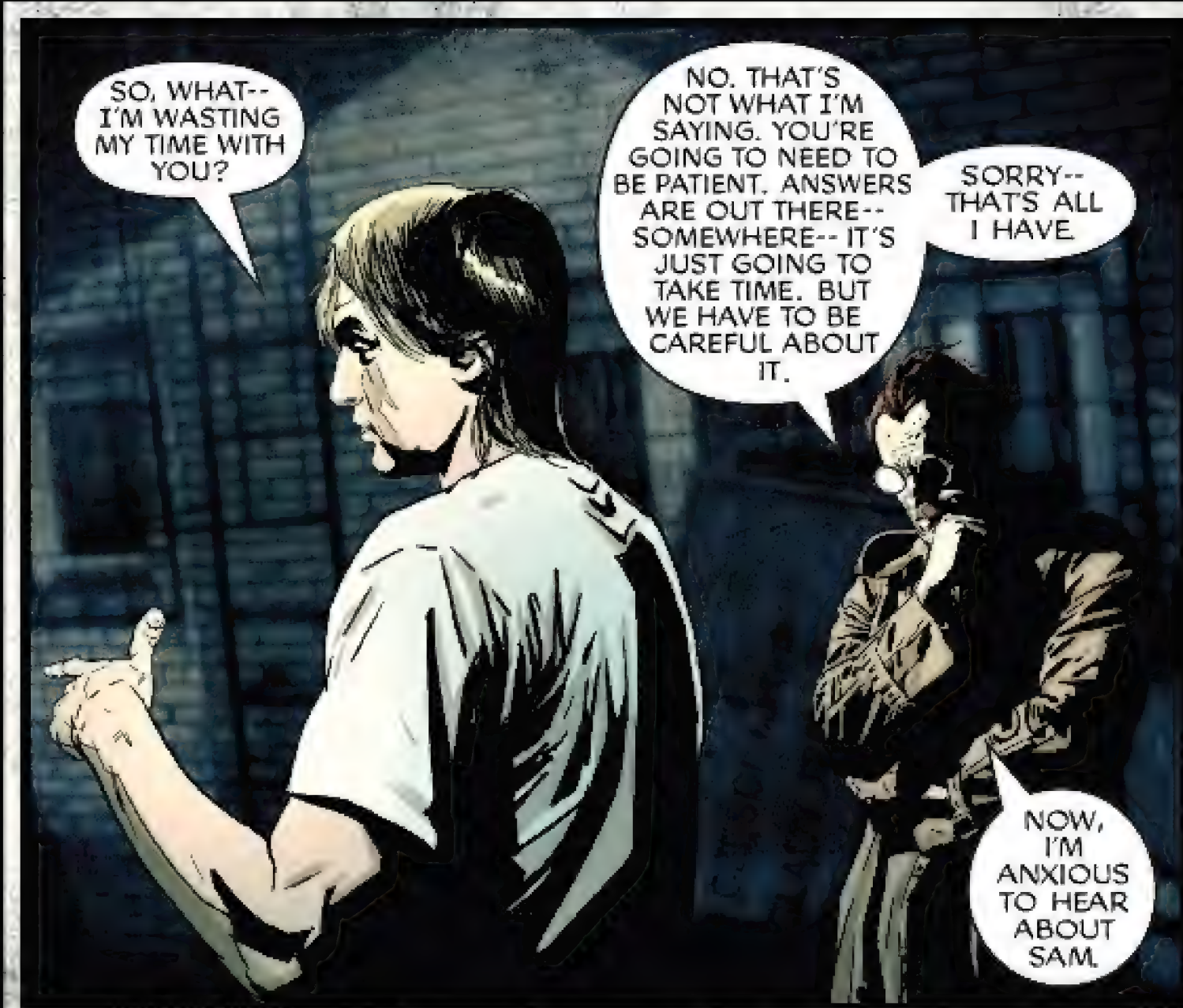
YOU'RE MISSING MY POINT!

THEN GET TO IT.

SOMEONE WITH THE POWER TO MANIPULATE OFFICIAL POLICE RECORDS-- WHICH, I'VE GOTTA TELL YOU, ISN'T AN EASY THING TO DO-- IS TRYING REAL HARD TO KEEP YOU IN THE DARK. TO KEEP YOUR PAST BURIED.

AND NOT ONLY FROM YOU, BUT FROM ANYONE WHO MIGHT COME DIGGING INTO THE MYSTERY OF WHO "JIM DOWNING" IS.







I WAS AFRAID THIS MIGHT HAPPEN.

MEANING?

SAM DIDN'T JUST HAVE A 'NORMAL' HEART ATTACK.

I SHOULD'VE SAID SOMETHING SOONER, BUT I WAS HOPING YOU'D BE ABLE TO HELP HIM WITHOUT CONFUSING THE MATTER.

YOUR CRYPTIC BULLSHIT IS STARTING TO WEAR THIN, SO HOW ABOUT YOU JUST CUT TO THE CHASE.

THEN HERE IT IS... A DEMON-- GOES BY THE NAME OF THE VIOLATOR-- IS WALKING THE STREETS DISGUISED AS A FILTH-RIDDEN CLOWN AND HE'S HAD A SPECIFIC DISTASTE FOR SAM AND I FOR SOME TIME. HE'D BEEN APPREHENDED AND ESCAPED CUSTODY NOT TOO LONG AGO. AND LATER, WHEN I CONFRONTED HIM HE WANTED TO SEND ME A MESSAGE EXPRESSING HIS DISPLEASURE. SO, SAM'S 'HEART ATTACK'-- OR WHATEVER THE DOCTORS WANT TO CALL IT-- WAS CAUSED BY THIS DEMON.



AND I'M NOT SURE OF YOUR PERSONAL HISTORY WITH DEMONS, BUT, I BELIEVE THAT WHATEVER'S WRONG WITH SAM SOMEHOW COMES FROM THE EXACT SAME PLACE AS YOUR COSTUME.

ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT THIS CLOWN AND VIOLATOR CREATURE-- THEY'RE ONE AND THE SAME?



THEY ARE.



THEN YOU TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT THEM.

RIGHT NOW!

TEN MINUTES LATER.





LOOK AT THEM...



GODDAMN VULTURES.



MARC?



ARE YOU-- WHAT'RE YOU DOING UP? IT'S LATE --

I KNOW-- COULDN'T SLEEP.

THEY'VE BEEN OUT THERE ALL NIGHT--

WHO? THE NEWS CREWS?

YEAH. THEY HAVEN'T LEFT SINCE JIM RESURRECTED THAT GUY IN THE STREET.* AND WE BOTH KNOW THEY WON'T LEAVE UNTIL THEY GET *SOME-THING*.

I EVEN HEARD A BUNCH ARE HERE FROM OVERSEAS.

SO WHY'S THAT A SURPRISE? YOU DID THE SAME THING FOR YEARS.

*See Spawn #204--Todd



IT'S... IT JUST FEELS DIFFERENT, YOU KNOW? BEING ON THIS SIDE OF IT. HELL-- WE'RE ACTUALLY *THE STORY* THIS TIME.

I THOUGHT THIS IS WHAT YOU WANTED? ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU SAID-- THAT YOU WANTED TO "MATTER?" WELL, NOW YOU DO.

MAYBE. BUT, WHAT ABOUT YOU? AND SARA? JIM'S THE *LEAD STORY* HERE, BUT THE MEDIA MORONS-- THEY'LL TEAR THROUGH ANYONE TO GET THEIR HEADLINE. YOU KNOW THAT!

EASY! I'M NOT THE ENEMY HERE.

SORRY.

DID YOU GET AHOLD OF SARA LAST NIGHT? I FELT ASLEEP WHEN YOU WERE TRYING.



SHE'S STILL
NOT
ANSWERING.

AND JIM?
I DON'T KNOW
WHERE THE HELL
HE IS, BUT...



THEN
CALL THE
COPS!

WHAT?

THE POLICE.
JUST CALL AND
TELL THEM--

TELL 'EM
WHAT?



THEY ALREADY
KNOW EVERYTHING!
THEY'VE GOT TVs
TOO! THE NEWS SAID
THEY WERE ALREADY
LOOKING FOR HIM.
THERE'S NOTHING I'M
GOING TO SAY THAT'LL
MAKE THEM LOOK
HARDER.

SO, WHAT?
YOU'RE GOING
TO DO NOTHING
THEN? *THAT'S
STUPID!*

JUST PHONE
THEM. SEE IF THEY
HAVE ANY LEADS ON
HIM. IT'S BETTER THAN
JUST WORRYING!
HERE-- I'VE ALREADY
DIALED THEM. IT'S
RINGING.



HELLO?

HI. MY NAME
IS MARC ROSEN
AND I'M A FRIEND--
WELL, ACTUALLY, I'M
THE MANAGER OF JIM
DOWNING. THE 'FAITH
HEALER'. I BELIEVE
YOU'RE LOOKING
FOR HIM.



IS THERE
SOMEONE THERE
I CAN SPEAK TO
ABOUT THIS
SITUATION?



VIOLENCE HAS ERUPTED YET AGAIN AT A NEW YORK CITY HOSPITAL. WE HAVE CONFIRMATION THAT A SHOOTING HAS LEFT ONE PERSON DEAD, AND AT LEAST ONE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER INJURED. OTHER DETAILS ARE STILL BEING CONFIRMED.

THERE ARE MULTIPLE REPORTS THAT THERE WAS AN EXCHANGE OF GUNFIRE BETWEEN A PLAINCLOTHES OFFICER AND A FEMALE HOSPITAL WORKER. JUST MOMENTS AGO MEDICS WERE OBSERVED AS THEY WHEELED OUT MULTIPLE BODY BAGS. WE'VE YET TO CONFIRM IF THEY WERE CONNECTED TO THE SAME SHOOTING INCIDENT.

THERE ALSO APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A BODY TAKEN FROM THE TOP OF A PARKED CAR. ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT THE VICTIM FELL FROM THE HOSPITAL ROOFTOP. ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN THE GUNFIRE EXCHANGE AND THIS BODY IS UNKNOWN AT THIS TIME, AS IS THE SEVERITY OF THE OFFICER'S INJURIES. WE WILL UPDATE THIS STORY, INCLUDING THE IDENTITIES OF THE VICTIMS, AS NEW DETAILS EMERGE.



I'M NOT *QUITE* READY TO PROCLAIM IT *THE* HOT NEW LOOK, AS HUNKY MESSIAH-OF-THE-MOMENT JIM DOWNING--THE MYSTERY HEALER OF NEW YORK CITY-- HAS ONLY BEEN ON OUR RADAR FOR A SHORT WHILE. *BUT*, HIS *STRIKINGLY* LOW-KEY FASHION SENSE HAS ALREADY STRUCK A CHORD WITH THOSE IN THE KNOW.

ONLY DAYS AFTER MAKING A *HUGE* SPLASH WITH HIS STREET-SIDE REVIVAL OF AN INJURED MEDIA MEMBER, JIM'S TRADEMARK "HAT-AND-SUNGLASSES AFTER SUNDOWN" LOOK WAS ON DISPLAY AT CLUBS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. *ALL* THE COOL KIDS-- FROM HOLLYWOOD'S NEW BREED TO MANHATTAN'S WORTHY ELITE-- WERE DECKED OUT IN THE SAME LOOK, SENDING A CLEAR MESSAGE THAT THOSE WHO WANT TO BE NOTICED WILL BE DOING IT *INCOGNITO*.

ON A MORE SERIOUS NOTE-- JIMMY, YOU MIGHT WANT TO STOP BY THE SCENE OF TONIGHT'S HOSPITAL MASSACRE. IT LOOKS LIKE YOUR MAGIC 'HEALING' TOUCH COULD COME IN HANDY.



DO YOU BELIEVE IT?!!

ANOTHER HOSPITAL ATTACK IN NEW YORK CITY!! VIOLENCE ERUPTED AGAIN THIS MORNING AT THE KAISER HOSPITAL IN UPTOWN MANHATTAN! SO FAR, HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATORS, THE COPS AND THE MAYOR'S OFFICE ARE ONLY WILLING TO SAY THAT "AN INVESTIGATION IS UNDERWAY." **ARE YOU KIDDING ME?!!!** WHY IN GOD'S NAME WILL **NO ONE** TELL US **ANYTHING**? WHAT ARE THEY TRYING TO **HIDE**?

COULD THIS BE **ANOTHER TERRORIST ACT**? ARE OUR HOSPITALS, NURSING HOMES AND MATERNITY WARDS NOW UNDER AN **ALL-OUT ATTACK** BY **AMERICA'S ENEMIES**? THE **RUBBLE** AT ST. ANTHONY'S IS **STILL SMOLDERING**! WHAT'S NEXT? **PRESCHOOLS**? **DAY CARE**?

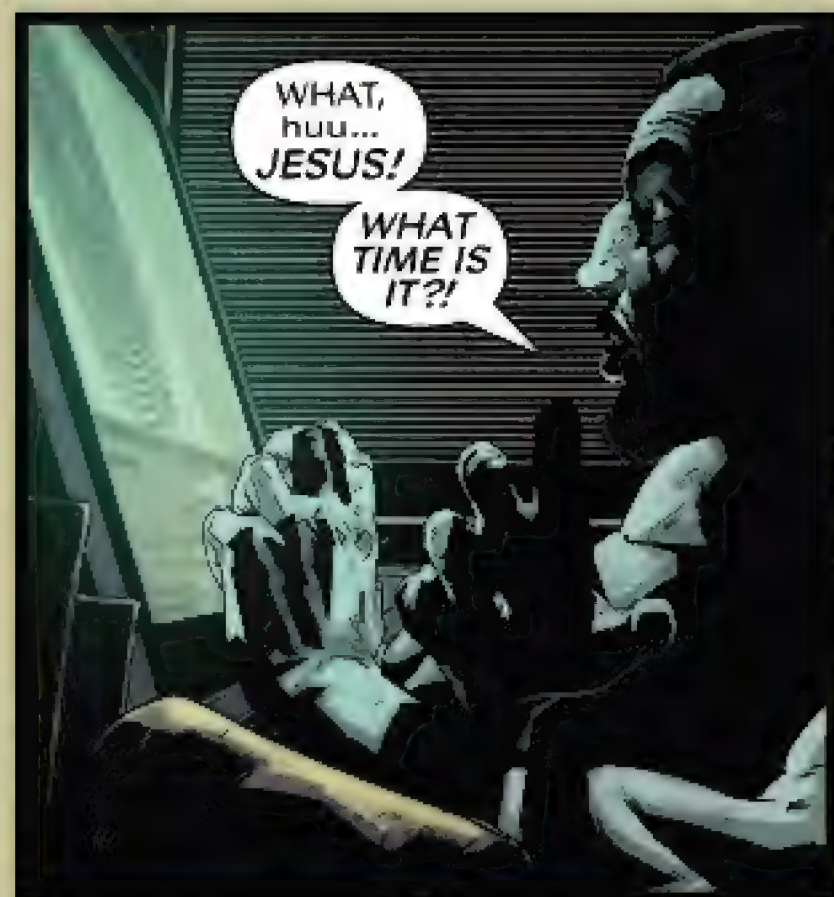
HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO PROTECT **OUR CHILDREN AND OUR FREEDOM** WHEN **THEY** WON'T LET US IN ON EVEN THE **TINIEST** DETAIL? A **LITTLE BIRDIE** TELLS ME **AT LEAST** A DOZEN BODIES WERE REMOVED FROM THE BUILDING. **A DOZEN! OR MORE!!** LIFE IN THIS TOWN IS JUST LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A **HORROR MOVIE**! **STAY INDOORS! STAY TUNED RIGHT HERE FOR THE REAL FACTS AS THEY DEVELOP!!**

ELSEWHERE.

CLOWN!!



COME OUT,
COME OUT
WHEREVER YOU
ARE.





SO, TALK TO HIM AND LET ME KNOW WHAT HE HAS TO SAY. BUT BEFORE YOU GET TOO DISTRACTED, I'M STILL WAITING ON YOUR FULL REPORT ON THE HOSPITAL HOMICIDES.* THE COMMISSIONER'S PUT TOGETHER AN INVESTIGATIVE TEAM THAT'S REPORTING DIRECTLY TO THE MAYOR'S OFFICE.

WE'RE ALL GOING TO HAVE TO BE PLAYING NICE WITH EACH OTHER FOR THE TIME BEING. IN THE MEANTIME-- WHERE'S TWITCH?

NO CLUE. SAW HIM EARLIER-- APPARENTLY YOUR CHIEF NAMED HIM MY PRIMARY BABYSITTER 'TIL ALL THIS MESS GETS CLEARED UP -- BUT HE STEPPED OUT. DON'T KNOW WHERE TO OR WHEN HE'S PLANNING ON BEING BACK.

GUESS I FELL ASLEEP WHILE HE WAS GONE.

*See SPAWN #207--Todd



IF YOU SEE HIM, TELL HIM TO CALL ME. I HAVE SOME DETAILS TO DISCUSS WITH HIM.



HOLD UP! YOU HAVE SOMETHING ABOUT DOWNING OR ANYTHING TO DO WITH MY OTHER CASE, YOU CAN TELL IT TO MY FACE! I'M SITTING RIGHT HERE!

THEN KEEP SITTING! YOU DON'T GET TO SET THE RULES, UNDERSTAND?

AND UNTIL I.A. CLEARS YOU OF ALL **WRONGDOING** IN THE HOSPITAL BLOOD-BATH, YOU CAN'T HAVE ANY INVOLVEMENT IN THE ONGOING INVESTIGATION. YOU **KNOW THAT**.

YOU SHOULDN'T EVEN BE SITTING HERE UNSUPERVISED.



SERIOUSLY? YOU'RE GONNA PULL THAT CRAP ON ME?

I AM! BUT I'D RATHER KICK YOUR ASS AND MAIL YOU BACK HOME TO VIRGINIA. UNFORTUNATELY, SINCE YOU'RE THE ONLY QUASI-WITNESS WE HAVE, I CAN'T DO THAT.

SO, I'LL HAVE TO DEAL WITH THIS SHIT STORM IN A MORE PROFESSIONAL MANNER. PRELIMINARY REPORTS INDICATE THERE'S FLUID ON THE VICTIMS THAT APPEARS TO BE OF A FOREIGN NATURE, WHICH MEANS, I'VE GOT MY HANDS FULL AS IT IS.



NOW TAKE THIS DAMN CALL AND LET ONE OF THE OTHER DETECTIVES FOLLOW UP ON IT. IN THE MEAN-TIME YOU'RE STILL A "PERSON OF INTEREST" IN THIS CASE.

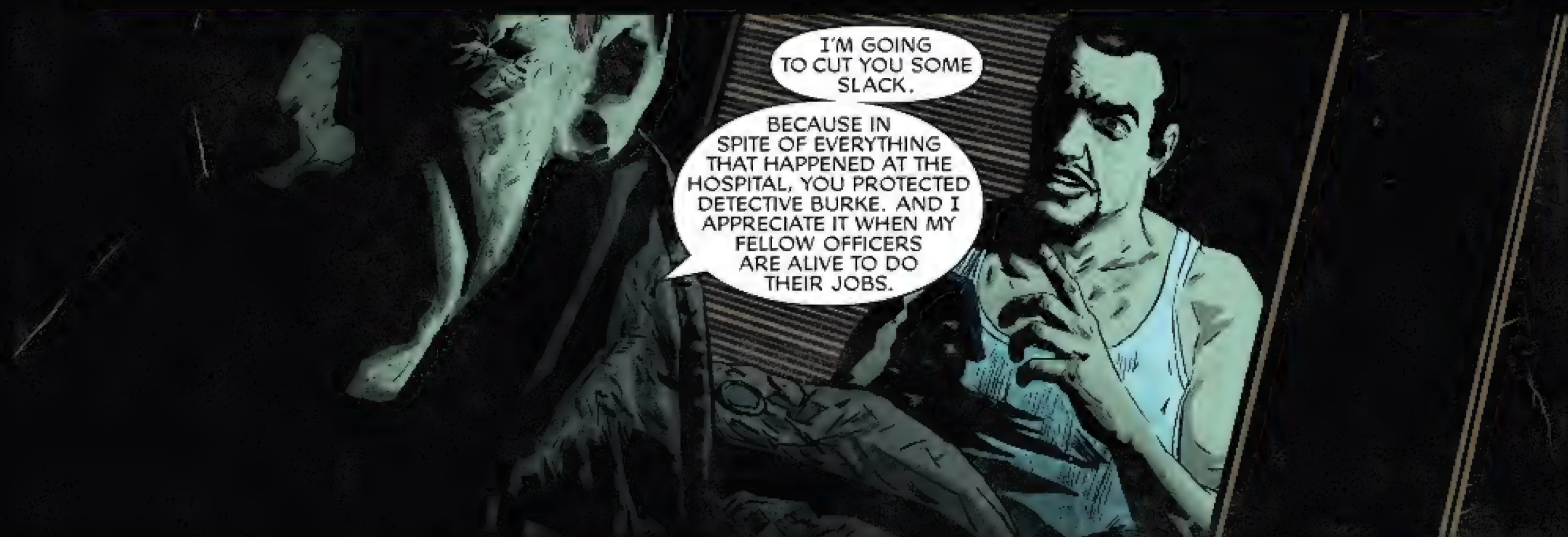
WHATEVER. THAT IT? YOU DONE WITH THE LECTURE?



JUST TELL TWITCH TO EITHER SEE ME, OR GIVE DISPATCH A CALL. THEN YOU CAN GO BACK TO SLEEP AND LET THE REST OF US CLEAN UP YOUR MESS.

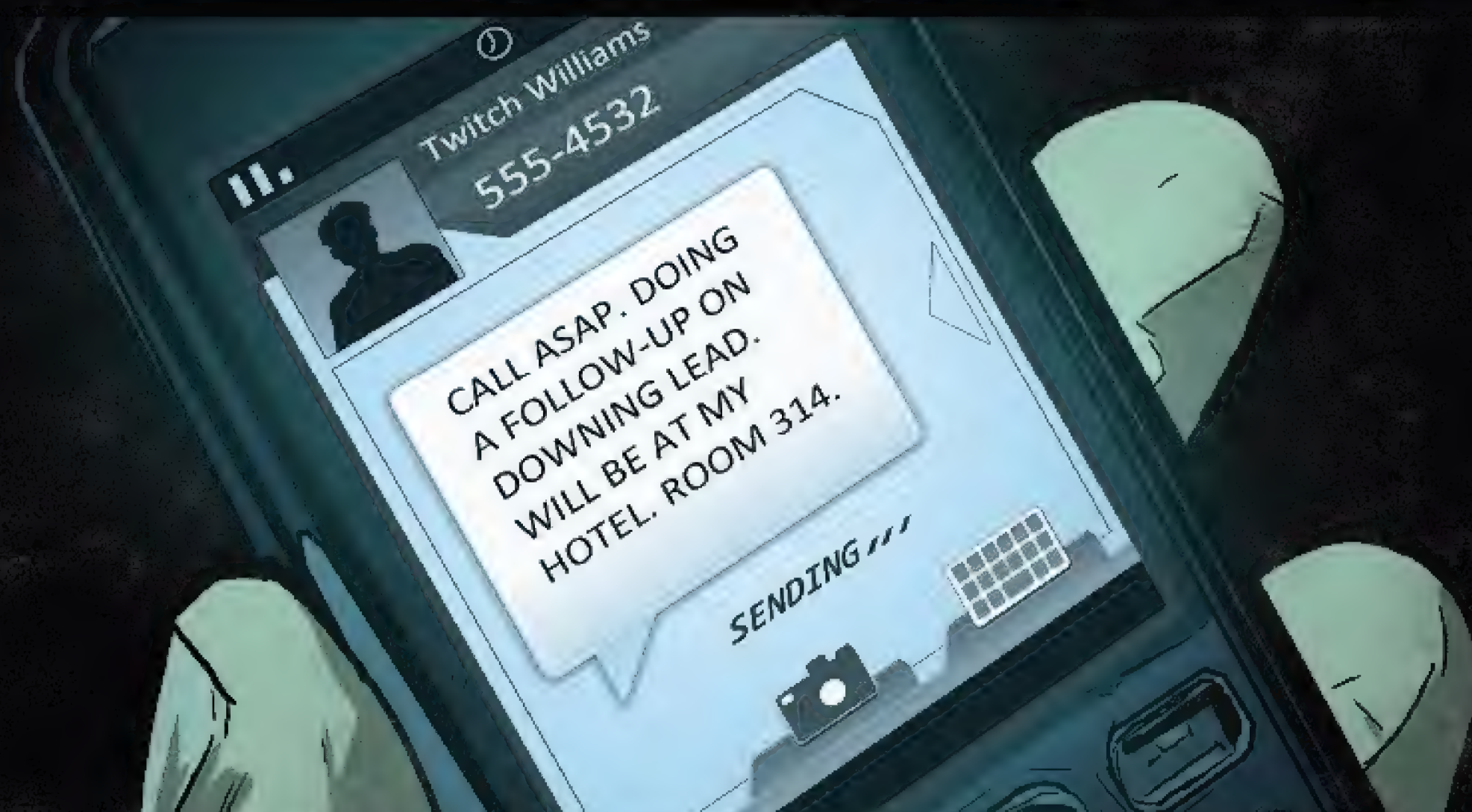


AND...? NOW, YOU'RE GOING TO JUST LEAVE ME HERE? UNSUPERVISED?



I'M GOING TO CUT YOU SOME SLACK.

BECAUSE IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED AT THE HOSPITAL, YOU PROTECTED DETECTIVE BURKE. AND I APPRECIATE IT WHEN MY FELLOW OFFICERS ARE ALIVE TO DO THEIR JOBS.



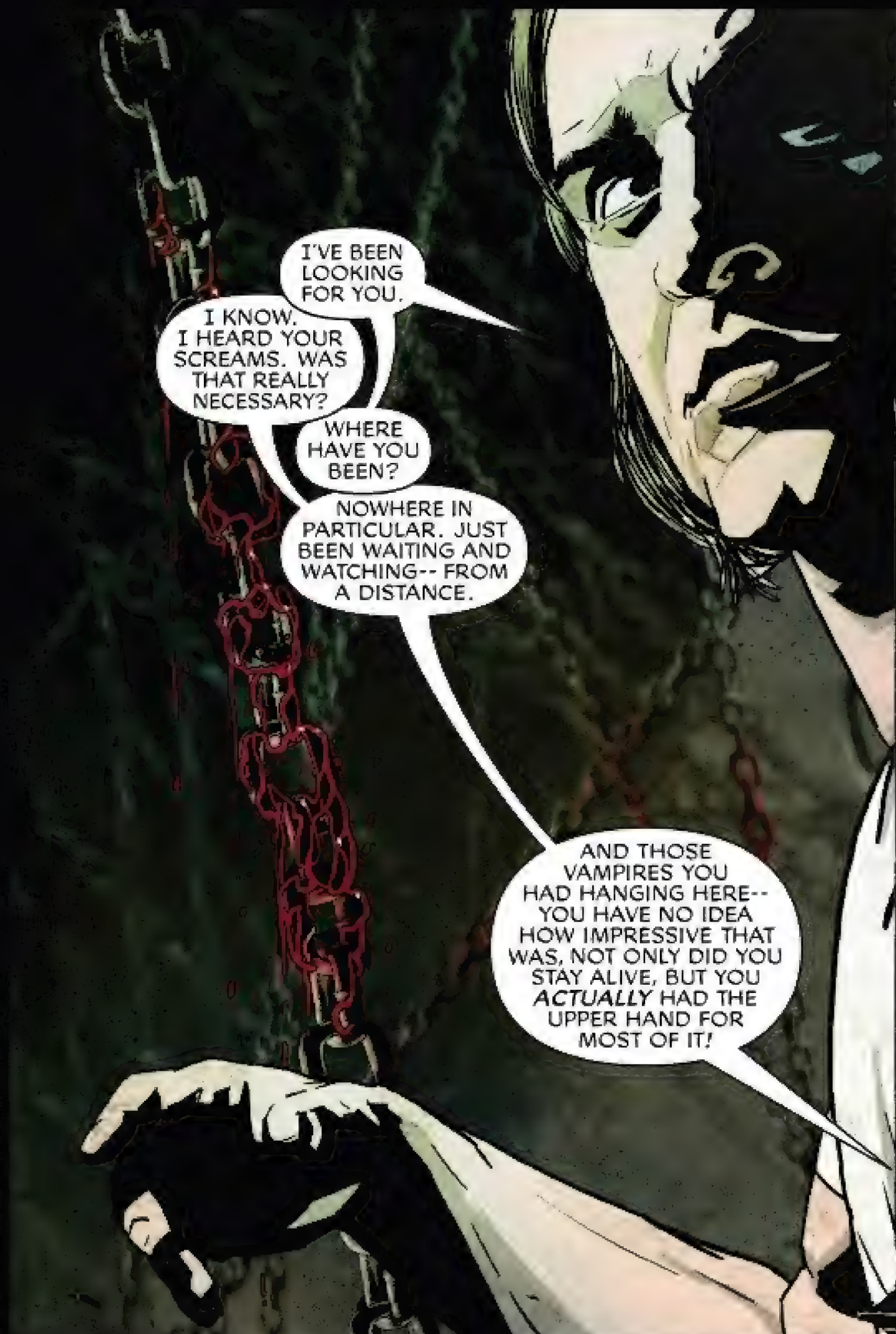
Twitch Williams
555-4532

CALL ASAP. DOING A FOLLOW-UP ON DOWNING LEAD. WILL BE AT MY HOTEL. ROOM 314.

SENDING



CRAZY
NIGHT,
HUH?



I KNOW. I HEARD YOUR SCREAMS. WAS THAT REALLY NECESSARY?

I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU.

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

NOWHERE IN PARTICULAR. JUST BEEN WAITING AND WATCHING-- FROM A DISTANCE.

AND THOSE VAMPIRES YOU HAD HANGING HERE-- YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW IMPRESSIVE THAT WAS, NOT ONLY DID YOU STAY ALIVE, BUT YOU ACTUALLY HAD THE UPPER HAND FOR MOST OF IT!

THOSE THREE WERE CREATED FROM SOME SERIOUS CROSS BREEDING OF VAMPIRES AND DEMONS. EVENTUALLY THEY BECAME HELL'S OWN VERSION OF THE 'SUPER SOLDIER'. KIND OF LIKE YOURSELF, EXCEPT WITH NO SOULS. AND SLOWLY OVER THE CENTURIES THEY BECAME MORE AND MORE RUTHLESS.

THEN IT BECAME CLEAR HELL'S ELITE NEEDED TO HIRE THEM BEFORE THEY BECAME VICTIMS THEMSELVES. SO, THEY SENT THEM ON EVERY UNIMAGINABLE MISSION YOU CAN THINK OF. AND TO THE SURPRISE OF THEIR BOSSES...



THEY SURVIVED EVERY MISSION. SEE, THE ELITE WERE HOPING THAT THEY'D FAIL ONCE, JUST SO THEY'D BE RID OF THEM. BUT THE THREE OF THEM FOUND OUT ABOUT THAT.



WHICH IS WHY THERE AREN'T ANY MORE DEMON ELITE IN EXISTENCE.



SO, IF YOU'RE SHOCKED THEY AREN'T STILL HANGING IN YOUR CHAINS... I'M NOT!



THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT HAS ASSURED US THAT OUR REQUEST FOR "COST CERTAINTY" WILL BE MET, REGARDLESS OF WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE EURO EXCHANGE RATE. PLUS, THEY'VE ACCEPTED OUR COLLATERAL IN THE BOND MARKET. CONTRACTS SHOULD BE IN OUR HANDS EARLY NEXT WEEK.

TOMORROW OUR LOBBYISTS WILL BE MEETING WITH THE REPUBLICAN LEADERS TO REINFORCE OUR POSITION ON THE E.P.A. ISSUES.



ANYTHING ELSE?

WE SHOULD BE CLOSING OUR RECENT ACQUISITION OF THE LITHIUM MINES IN SLOVAKIA IN ABOUT TWO DAYS. THE INTERNATIONAL REGULATORS HAVE GIVEN THE FINAL SIGNOFF ON ALL E.P.A. REQUIREMENTS, WHICH SHOULD HAVE US AT MAXIMUM CAPACITY IN ABOUT THREE MONTHS.

THAT'LL BRING OUR PORTFOLIO UP TO ABOUT 37% IN FOREIGN DIVERSIFICATION-- INCLUDING OUR MANUFACTURING INTERESTS.



ON ANOTHER TOPIC, WE RECEIVED A CALL FROM OUR CONTACT AT THE PENTAGON SAYING THERE HAD BEEN SOME INQUIRES INTO A "SPECIAL MATTER" YOU WOULD HAVE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT.

GOOD. DOWNING'S TAKEN THE BAIT.



I WILL FILL YOU IN ON OUR LATEST SHAREHOLDER MEETING ON THE DRIVE TO THE BANQUET TONIGHT, MR. RAMUS.

PICK ME UP AT NINE. WE DON'T NEED TO GET THERE TOO EARLY.

NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I'M LATE FOR A MEETING.





ALRIGHT, GENTLEMEN-- WHAT DO YOU HAVE FOR ME?



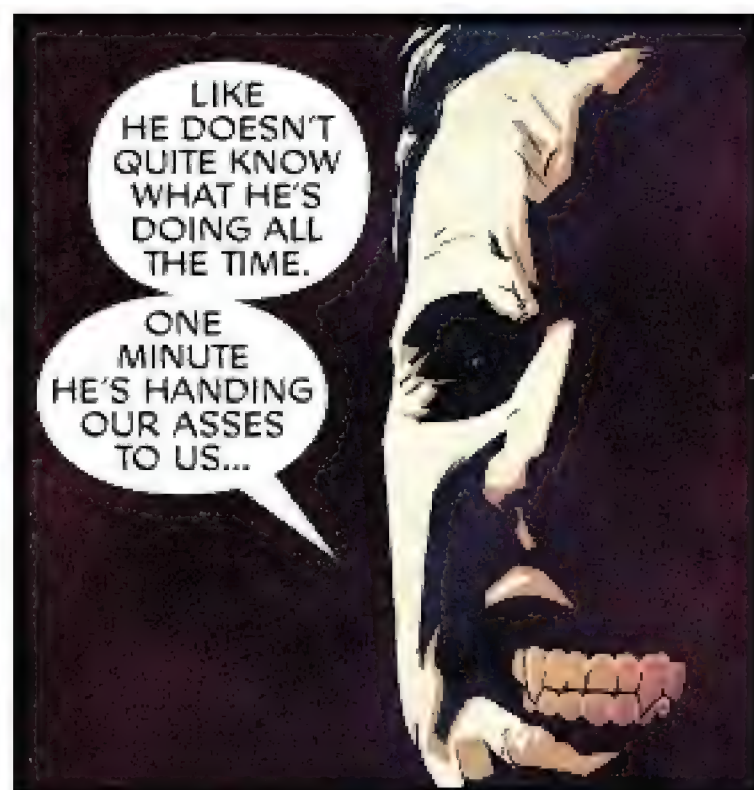
THAT'S JUST IT, WE CAN'T TELL YET.

WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

IT MEANS, **BLUDD**, THAT YOUR NEW SPAWN SEEMS TO BE A LITTLE... um... INCONSISTENT.



INCONSISTENT HOW?



LIKE HE DOESN'T QUITE KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING ALL THE TIME.

ONE MINUTE HE'S HANDING OUR ASSES TO US...



...THE NEXT, HE'S BARELY ABLE TO WALK ON HIS OWN. BUT I'LL TELL YOU WHAT, YOU WERE RIGHT. WHEN HE'S ON HIS 'A' GAME IT'S LIKE HE'S POSSESSED OR SOMETHING.



ALMOST AS IF HIS PERSONALITY IS CHANGING. WHAT'S THAT ABOUT?



THE COSTUME. IT'S SLOWLY GETTING INTO HIS BLOOD-STREAM.



BESIDES STRENGTH, DID HE EXHIBIT ANY OTHER TRAITS OF INTEREST?



TRAITS?!

IS THAT
WHAT YOU'RE
CALLING
THEM?

WE'LL OPEN
YOUR EYES! HOW
MANY OF US ARE SITTING
IN FRONT OF YOU? AND
BEFORE YOU HURT YOUR-
SELF, THE ANSWER IS TWO!
NOW ASK YOURSELF HOW
MANY OF US YOU SENT OUT
TO DO YOUR 'TESTING'
ON SPAWN!

SO HIS 'TRAITS'--
F**CKIN' SWALLOWED
OUR BROTHER!! RIGHT INTO
THE SHADOWS. HE OPENED A
GODDAMN PORTAL TO THE
ABYSS THEN SLAMMED IT
SHUT IN THE BLINK OF AN
EYE. SINCE WHEN DID
SPAWNS LEARN TO DO THAT?
AND MORE IMPORTANTLY,
WHY DIDN'T YOU
WARN US?



I THOUGHT
THAT'S HOW
YOU GOT YOUR
POWER.



BY
KNOWING
EVERY-
THING!



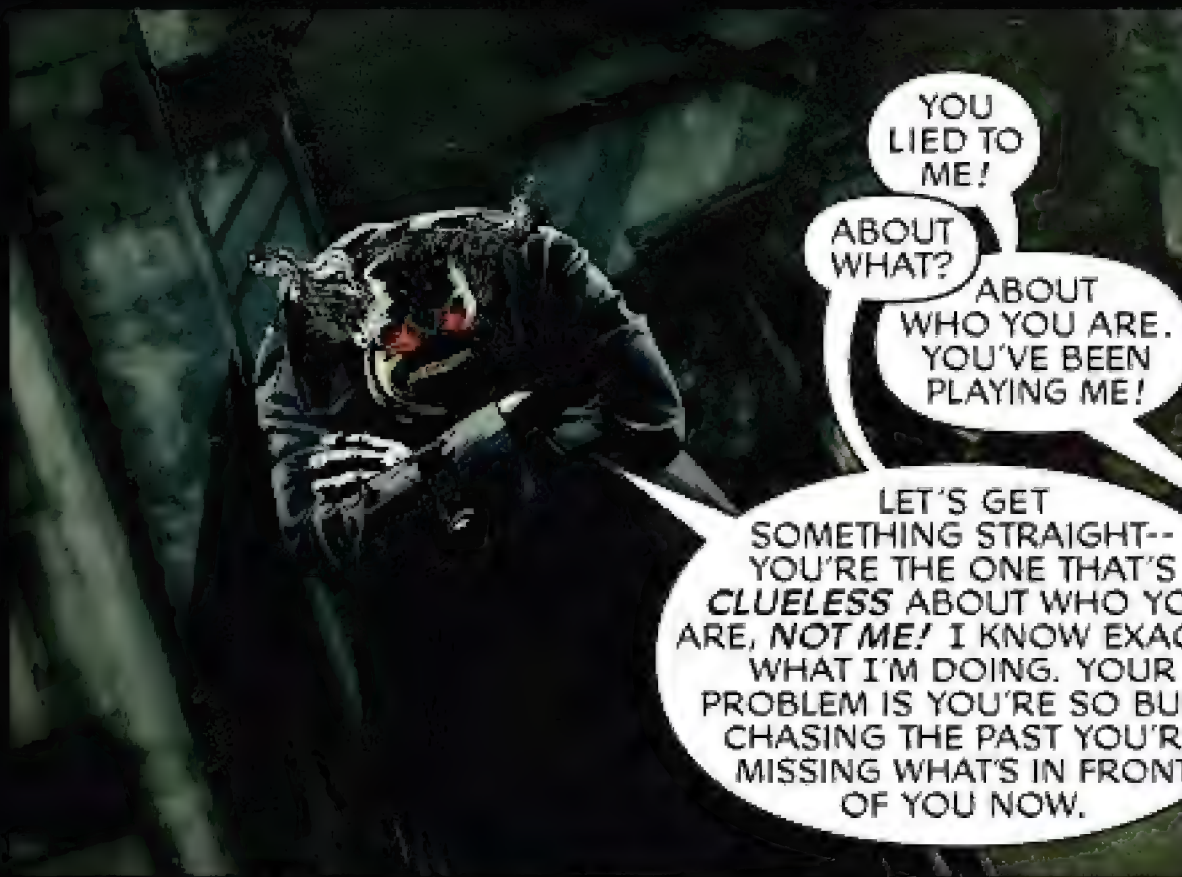
IF NOT...
WHAT GOOD ARE
YOU TO US?



I'LL GET
YOUR BROTHER
BACK-- IF HE'S
STILL ALIVE.

BUT IF SPAWN
DID WHAT YOU SAID
IN THOSE ALLEYS, THEN
HE'S JUST EXPOSED THE
WHEREABOUTS OF
HEAVEN'S GATEWAY-- THE
DIRECT LINK CONNECTING
EARTH TO GOD
HIMSELF!

AND WHETHER
HEAVEN KNOWS IT OR
NOT, THEY'RE ABOUT TO BE
INVADED!



YOU
LIED TO
ME!

ABOUT
WHAT?

ABOUT
WHO YOU ARE.
YOU'VE BEEN
PLAYING ME!

LET'S GET
SOMETHING STRAIGHT--
YOU'RE THE ONE THAT'S
CLUELESS ABOUT WHO YOU
ARE, **NOT ME!** I KNOW EXACTLY
WHAT I'M DOING. YOUR
PROBLEM IS YOU'RE SO BUSY
CHASING THE PAST YOU'RE
MISSING WHAT'S IN FRONT
OF YOU NOW.



ALL YOU
HAD TO DO
WAS ASK AND I'D
HAVE TOLD YOU
WHAT THE STAKES
WERE FOR YOU
AND I.

I DON'T
WANT TO
LISTEN TO ANY
MORE OF
YOUR LIES!



I DON'T
CARE! JUST
SHUT UP
AND LISTEN.
YOU MIGHT
LEARN SOME-
THING.

YOU'RE RIGHT, I
HAVEN'T BEEN COMPLETELY
HONEST WITH YOU. I'M A DEMON--
AND LIKE YOUR COSTUME, WE BOTH HAD
THE SAME BOSS UNTIL HE DISAPPEARED.*
EVERYONE THAT SERVED HIM THOUGHT HE
WAS DEAD, SO THEY BEGAN TO DO THEIR
OWN THING. WHAT ONCE WAS A TIGHT ARMY
BECAME A SCATTERED BUNCH OF ROGUES.
THOUSANDS OF THEM ARE NOW HERE
ON EARTH-- BUT THAT'S NOT MY
IMMEDIATE CONCERN.

OUR BOSS
IS COMING BACK--
THAT'S THE PROBLEM.
AND SINCE HE'LL BELIEVE
EVERYONE'S BETRAYED
HIM, WHEN HE GETS BACK
TO FULL POWER HE'LL TREAT
US ALL AS HIS ENEMIES...
EVEN THOSE OF US THAT
WERE LOYAL. BUT HE NEEDS
TO COLLECT HIS POWER...
PIECE IT TOGETHER
BEFORE HE CAN BE AT
FULL STRENGTH.

BUT I'VE
STOLEN AND
HIDDEN ONE OF
THOSE PIECES. HE
DOESN'T KNOW THAT
YET, BUT WHEN HE DOES,
HE'LL DESTROY EVERY-
THING AND EVERYONE IN
HIS PATH WHILE TRYING
TO LOCATE IT. SO, YOU'VE
GOT **TWO OPTIONS**,
EITHER FIGHT HIM ON
YOUR OWN OR BAND
TOGETHER WITH
OTHERS.

THAT'S WHY
I LIED TO YOU.
BECAUSE I
NEED YOU.





BUT I
DON'T
NEED YOU!!



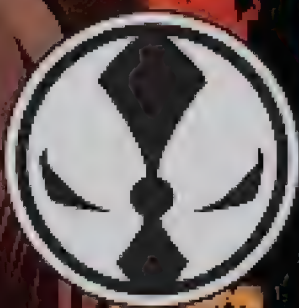
THEN
WHAT?!!
YOU'LL FIGHT
HIM ON YOUR
OWN?

YOU DON'T
HAVE TO LIKE
ME, YOU ONLY
HAVE TO WANT
TO SURVIVE!



BECAUSE NONE
OF US CAN DEFEAT
MALEBOLGIA ALONE.
NONE OF US!
BUT I CAN BE VERY
USEFUL TO YOU.
HERE...

LET ME
SHOW
YOU!!



SPAWN

image

212

DIGITAL
EDITION



VIOLATION
OF
TRUST
PART 2 OF 2

20 MINUTES AGO.

"WE THROUGH HERE? OR DO YOU WANT TO KEEP GOING? IT'S UP TO YOU.

"I DON'T MIND *KICKING YOUR ASS* A LITTLE LONGER-- YOU JUST TELL ME WHEN YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH.

"THOUGH I'VE GOTTA TELL YOU, JIM-- EVEN WITH THE FEW GOOD LICKS YOU'VE GOTTEN IN-- I'M GETTING BORED OF THIS *SKIRMISH* OF OURS. SO, WHY DON'T WE PUT IT ON HOLD AND CLEAN OURSELVES UP A LITTLE."



"I MEAN IN ALL SERIOUSNESS, YOU'RE REALLY SOMETHING SPECIAL. MOST SPAWNS WOULD BE A PILE OF GOO BY NOW.

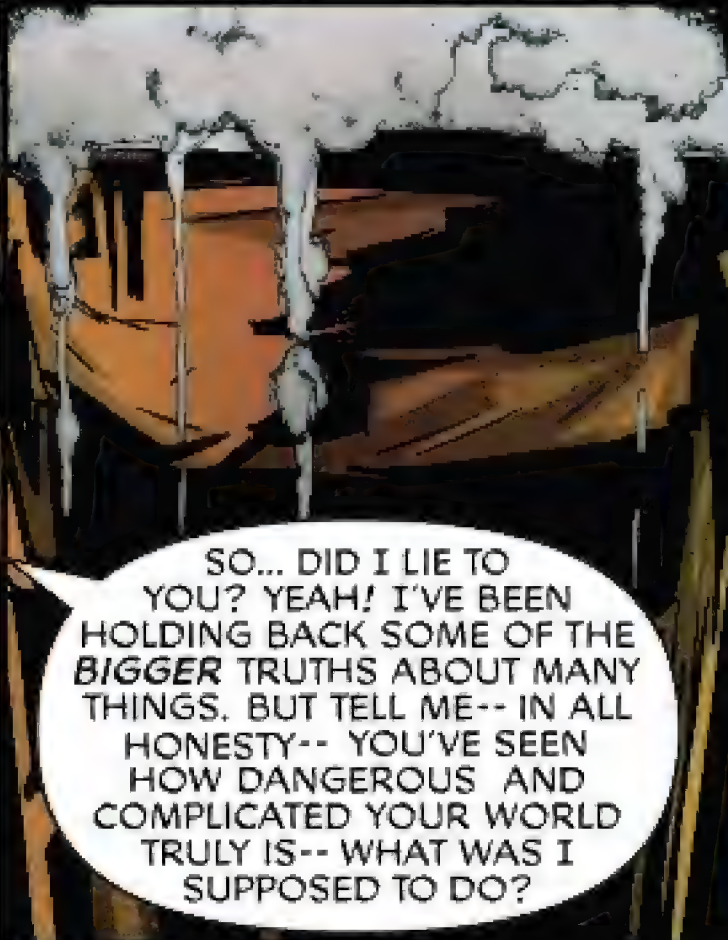
"BUT NOT YOU. SOMEHOW... YOU'RE *DIFFERENT*."

"THAT'S WHY I'M GOING TO BUY YOU A BEER! A *BIG FAT FROTHY ONE!*

"AND BEFORE YOU SAY A WORD-- I WON'T TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER. JUST GIVE ME A MINUTE TO FRESHEN MYSELF UP, IF YOU DON'T MIND."



NOW.



SO... DID I LIE TO YOU? YEAH! I'VE BEEN HOLDING BACK SOME OF THE *BIGGER* TRUTHS ABOUT MANY THINGS. BUT TELL ME-- IN ALL HONESTY-- YOU'VE SEEN HOW DANGEROUS AND COMPLICATED YOUR WORLD TRULY IS-- WHAT WAS I SUPPOSED TO DO?



I DIDN'T KNOW YOU. COULDN'T TRUST YOU. NOT JUST OFF-HAND. NOT WITH WHAT'S AT STAKE. SO I KEPT THINGS FROM YOU THAT I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT NOT ACCEPT-- AT LEAST NOT WHILE YOU'RE SO NEW AT ALL THIS.



BUT!... THAT'S THE PAST! SO, CHEERS TO YOU, PAL!

AND I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND MY NEW LOOK-- THOUGHT I'D TRY TO LOOK A LITTLE MORE PRESENTABLE-- CREEPY LITTLE CLOWNS TEND TO FREAK PEOPLE OUT, ESPECIALLY THE KIDS.

SO WHAT ARE YOU? A CHANGE-LING?

SOME-THING LIKE THAT, THOUGH I HAVE LIMITATIONS.

TELL ME ABOUT IT. I'M STILL TRYING TO FIND THE 'STARTS AND STOPS' OF MY POWERS TOO.

THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE AN UPPER LIMIT ON YOU YET, AS FAR AS I CAN TELL. WHICH MAKES YOU DIFFERENT THAN ALL THE REST OF THEM.

MEANING THE OTHER SPAWNS?

RIGHT.

SO NOW YOU THINK YOU KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT ME-- IS THAT IT?

YOU'RE GETTING AHEAD OF YOURSELF. WE CALLED A TRUCE BACK IN THE ALLEYS BECAUSE I SAID I'D COME CLEAN AND LAY MY CARDS ON THE TABLE FOR YOU. HOPEFULLY, YOU'LL APPRECIATE THE AWKWARD POSITION I FOUND MYSELF IN AND SEE WHY IT WAS NECESSARY TO DECEIVE YOU ALL THIS TIME. BUT YOU DO WHAT-EVER YOU NEED TO WITH THIS INFORMATION. YOU'RE YOUR OWN MAN.

AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT YOU SPAWNS KEEP TELLING YOURSELVES.

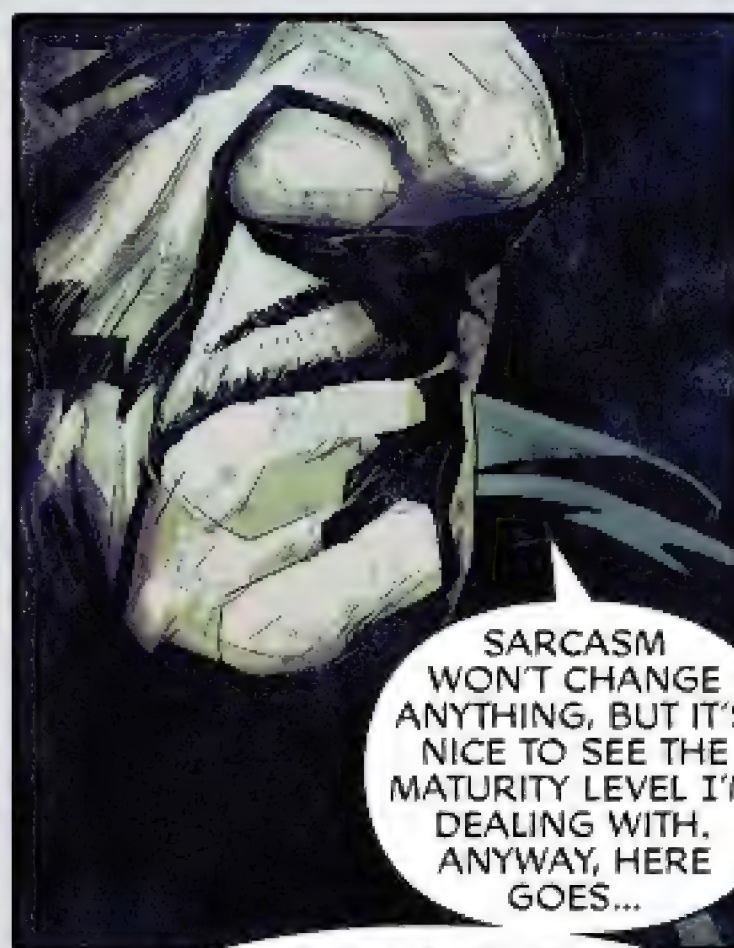
IN THE END YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIKE ME, JIM-- I'M NOT LOOKING FOR A FRIEND. I'M LOOKING FOR HELP AND YOU PROVIDE THAT IN SPADES. I'M GOING TO NEED THAT IF WE HOPE TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF PREVENTING **MALEBOLGIA** FROM TAKING OVER THE EARTH!



'CAUSE WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT, EVERYTHING I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU IS TRUE. THE PROBLEM IS, YOU HUMANS DON'T WANT TO ACCEPT HOW THE AFTERLIFE REALLY WORKS.



NOT ME. I'M ON PINS AND NEEDLES.



SARCASM WON'T CHANGE ANYTHING, BUT IT'S NICE TO SEE THE MATURITY LEVEL I'M DEALING WITH. ANYWAY, HERE GOES...



BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT WILLING TO ABSORB THE FACT THAT SOMEONE LIKE ME, ISN'T SO DIFFERENT THAN YOU. I'VE BEEN CURSED TOO! HAD MY IDENTITY TAKEN FROM ME TOO! NOW ALL I'M CAPABLE OF IS HOLDING MY TRUE FORM FOR A LIMITED TIME PERIOD.

DID I LIE TO YOU AND USE YOU? YES! IT WAS MY EFFORT TO GAIN YOUR TRUST BECAUSE I KNEW HOW YOU'D REACT IF I INITIALLY CONFRONTED YOU IN MY TRUE VIOLATOR FORM. INSTEAD I PLAYED MY PART BECAUSE YOUR KIND ALWAYS ACTS OUT OF ANGER TO THINGS THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND.



DURING WHICH I CAN MORPH, SHIFT OR TRANSFORM INTO NEARLY ANY SHAPE AND SIZE.

BUT IT DOESN'T LAST LONG.



EVENTUALLY I REVERT TO MY CLOWNISH FORM AND SCURRY BACK INTO THE SHADOWS.

THE BIGGER QUESTION YOU SHOULD BE ASKING YOURSELF IS *WHY*? WHY WOULD I HIDE IN THE SHADOWS?

BECAUSE... I DON'T WANT THEM TO FIND ME. AND BY '*THEM*' I'M TALKING ABOUT HEAVEN AND HELL. IF THEY DON'T KNOW WHERE I AM THAT ALLOWS ME TIME TO CONTINUE PLOTTING AGAINST THEM.

SEE, HERE'S HOW IT *REALLY* WORKS. HUMANS DON'T GO TO HEAVEN OR HELL BASED ON THEIR ACTIONS HERE ON EARTH. IT HAS ***NOTHING*** TO DO WITH HOW GOOD OR EVIL YOU ARE. ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!

INSTEAD, EVERY TIME SOMEONE DIES, THEIR SOUL GOES TO THE SIDE THAT DIDN'T GET THE LAST ONE. A PERSON DIES, THEY GO TO HEAVEN. THE NEXT PERSON THAT DIES GOES TO HELL. NEXT GOES TO HEAVEN. THEN HELL.

HEAVEN. HELL. HEAVEN. HELL. BACK AND FORTH FOREVER.

AND BECAUSE THAT'S HOW A SOUL'S DESTINATION IS DETERMINED. IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES... DEPENDING ON EXACTLY WHEN THEY DIED, HITLER AND BIN LADEN COULD BE SITTING IN HEAVEN WHILE MOTHER TERESA ROTS IN HELL.

AND THOUGH THAT THOUGHT MIGHT DISTURB YOUR SENSIBILITIES-- GOD AND SATAN DISLIKE IT JUST AS MUCH AS YOU DO. SO FROM TIME TO TIME THEY TRADE WITH EACH OTHER. GOD WILL TAKE BACK MOTHER TERESA-- ***BUT*** HE MAY HAVE TO GIVE UP JACK THE RIPPER IN RETURN.

THE PROBLEM? GOD ISN'T ALWAYS WILLING TO SWAP THE MOST HEINOUS SOULS HE HAS FOR THE PURE ONES. YOU KNOW WHY? BECAUSE HE UNDERSTANDS THOSE CORRUPT SOULS SERVE A PURPOSE FOR HIM, TOO.

THIS IS BULLSHIT!



WHY?!!

BECAUSE YOU'VE BEEN TAUGHT SOMETHING ELSE FROM BIRTH?! BECAUSE ORGANIZED RELIGION PUTS A BOOK IN YOUR HANDS ON SUNDAY AND BRAINWASHES YOU INTO BELIEVING IT'S SOME FLAWLESS PIECE OF WORK?

THAT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACTS! YOU'LL SEE IT WITH YOUR OWN EYES SOME DAY. FOR NOW YOU'LL HAVE TO DEAL WITH IT AS BEST YOU CAN.

KEEP GOING.

YOU WANT ME TO CONTINUE OR NOT?

LIKE I SAID, GOD CAN'T TRADE AWAY ALL THE EVIL SOULS HE HAS FOR THE SWEET BINGO LADIES SATAN IS HOLDING. BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT WHEN THE **APOCALYPSE** COMES HE DOESN'T WANT AN ARMY OF PASSIVE, POLITE SOULS. HEAVEN WOULD GET SLAUGHTERED. RAPISTS, MURDERERS, AND ASSASSINS VERSUS A BUNCH OF SOCCER MOMS ISN'T GOING TO CUT IT. GOD GETS THAT.

BECAUSE WHEN THE HOLY WAR BREAKS OUT, GOD WANTS HIS ARMY TO BE **AS RUTHLESS AS HELL'S**.

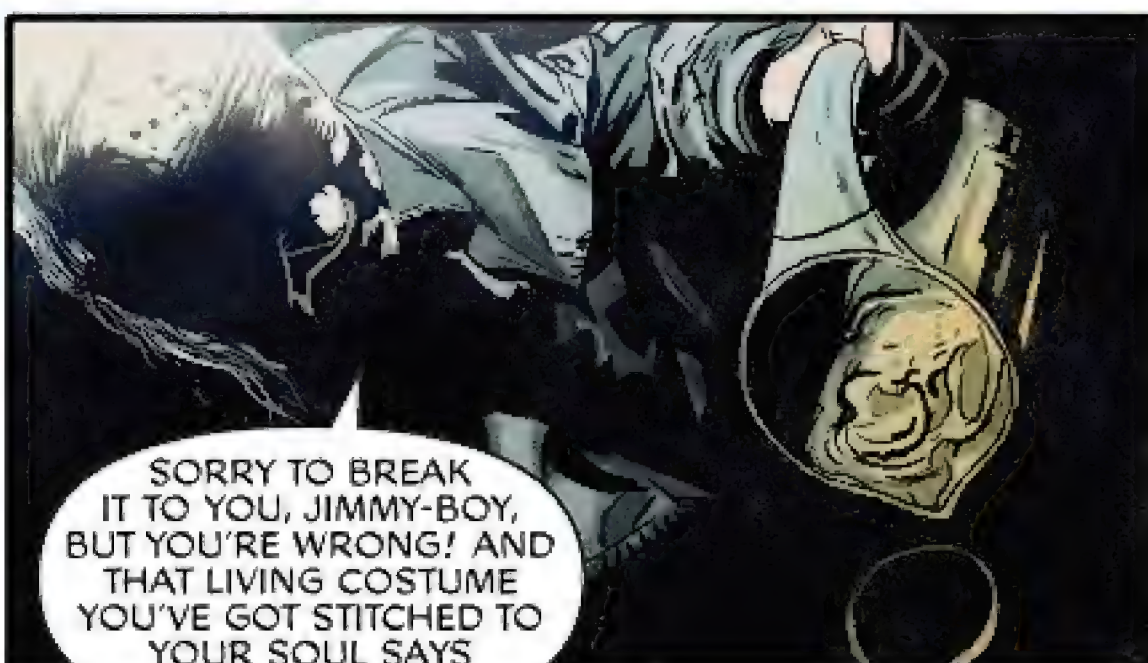
AND THAT'S WHERE WE COME IN. WE'RE NOT QUITE SO DIFFERENT IN THE GRAND SCHEME OF ALL THINGS.



I'M NOTHING LIKE YOU!



SORRY TO BREAK IT TO YOU, JIMMY-BOY, BUT YOU'RE WRONG! AND THAT LIVING COSTUME YOU'VE GOT STITCHED TO YOUR SOUL SAYS DIFFERENT.





ON
TOP OF
THAT, WE
BOTH SERVE
THE SAME
MASTER!

HIS NAME IS
MALEBOLGIA-- RULER
OF THE 8th CIRCLE OF HELL.
HE'S CREATED EVERY HELLSPAWN
THAT'S EVER EXISTED... **EXCEPT**
YOU. YOU'RE THE ONLY SPAWN
THAT'S EVER BEEN BORN
OUTSIDE OF HELL. WHICH
MAKES YOU UNIQUE.

BUT NOW HE'S COMING
BACK AFTER HIS DEFEAT.*
AND HE DOESN'T
LIKE WHERE THINGS ARE
HEADED.

IN FACT--
HE'S PISSED. FEELS
BETRAYED. NOT JUST BY
ME-- THOUGH I'M PRETTY
HIGH UP ON HIS SHIT
LIST AT THIS POINT--
BUT BY EVERYONE--
EVERYTHING.

AND YOU,
MR. DOWNING--
YOU'RE GOING TO PLAY
A BIG PART IN HIS PLANS.
BECAUSE THAT SUIT YOU WEAR--
IT'S A WEAPON. HIS WEAPON. AND
MALEBOLGIA, HE'S GOING TO
COME FOR YOU-- COME FOR IT--
THAT SUIT-- FULL THROTTLE.
BECAUSE HE NEEDS
YOU TO BE HIS SLAVE.



BUT THERE'S A DIFFERENCE THIS TIME.

NOW HE'S LOOKING TO EXPAND HIS TURF TO EARTH-- HE TOLD ME DIRECTLY THAT HE PLANS TO END IT ALL-- TO BRING ABOUT THE *FINAL RECKONING*.* AND LIKE A TERRORIST BOMBER, HE'S WILLING TO KILL HIMSELF IF IT SERVES A GREATER 'GOOD.' AND YOU, HE SAID-- YOU'RE HIS ACE IN THE HOLE.

SO IF I HAD ANY DOUBTS ABOUT YOUR 'UNIQUENESS' BEFORE, MALEBOLGIA CONFIRMED IT BY MAKING YOU HIS CENTER-PIECE.

HE'S NEVER USED A SPAWN TO ASSIST IN ANY DIRECT 'RETRIBUTION MISSION.' AND THOUGH HE'S ALWAYS FAVORED THOSE HALFBREEDS-- AND THERE HAVE BEEN PLENTY TO CHOOSE FROM-- NONE HAVE EVER ACTUALLY SERVED AS HIS MESSENGER.

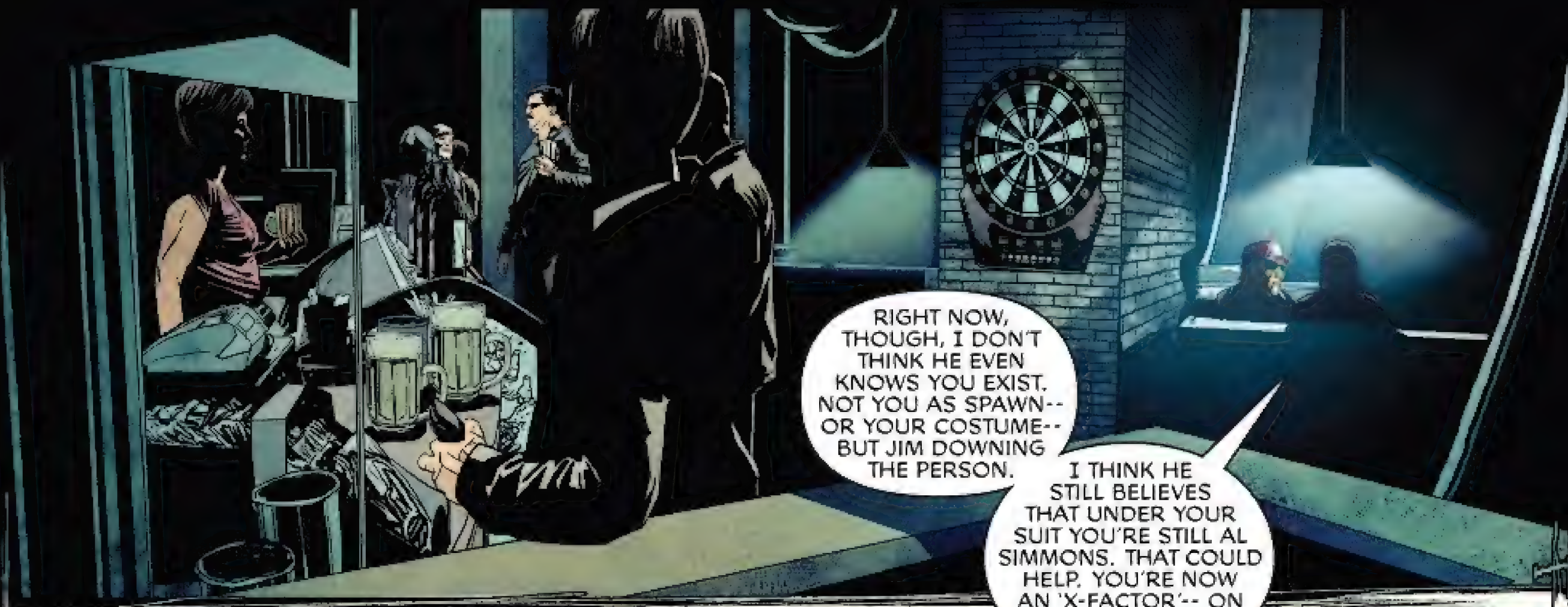
DID HE SAY HOW HE WAS PLANNING ON RECRUITING ME TO HIS SIDE?

NO. BUT HE CAN'T DO **ANYTHING** UNTIL HE PUTS HIMSELF BACK TOGETHER.

WHAT'S THAT MEAN?

DON'T WORRY, I'LL GET TO THAT.

*See SPAWN #200--Todd



RIGHT NOW, THOUGH, I DON'T THINK HE EVEN KNOWS YOU EXIST. NOT YOU AS SPAWN-- OR YOUR COSTUME-- BUT JIM DOWNING THE PERSON.

I THINK HE STILL BELIEVES THAT UNDER YOUR SUIT YOU'RE STILL AL SIMMONS. THAT COULD HELP, YOU'RE NOW AN 'X-FACTOR'-- ON A COUPLE OF FRONTS.



FIRST, I'VE FOUGHT AND DESTROYED EVERY SPAWN THAT'S EVER BEEN SENT TO EARTH. IT DIDN'T MATTER WHEN THEY APPEARED OR WHAT KIND OF WEAPONS THEY TRIED TO USE AGAINST ME. I TOOK THEM ALL DOWN.

EXCEPT ONE. THAT WAS SIMMONS.

HE'S THE ONLY ONE THAT TOOK HIMSELF OUT OF THE GAME INTENTIONALLY. AT FIRST I THOUGHT HE'D FINALLY GONE AROUND THE BEND. BUT NOW-- NOW I'M NOT SO SURE.

HE MAY HAVE ACTUALLY KNOWN WHAT HE WAS DOING WHEN HE COMMITTED SUICIDE-- BECAUSE HIS SUDDEN DISAPPEARANCE AND YOUR IMMEDIATE PRESENCE HAS SHIFTED SOME OF THE GAME PIECES AROUND.

HE ACTUALLY MIGHT HAVE SENSED IT WOULD THROW EVERYTHING INTO TEMPORARY CHAOS-- CREATING A DISTRACTION BIG ENOUGH TO SNEAK YOU IN THE BACK DOOR.



WHICH MEANS
THE SECOND--
AND MORE IMPORTANT
DIFFERENCE-- IS THAT,
OF ALL THE SPAWNS EVER
CREATED, YOU'RE THE
ONLY ONE TO HOST A
SYMBIOTE **AND** STILL
HAVE A BEATING HEART.
THAT'S NEVER BEEN
DONE BEFORE.



EVERY
OTHER SPAWN
HAD DIED IN THEIR
HUMAN FORM AND
BEEN 'REBORN' IN
HELL BEFORE
STEPPING FOOT
BACK ON
EARTH.

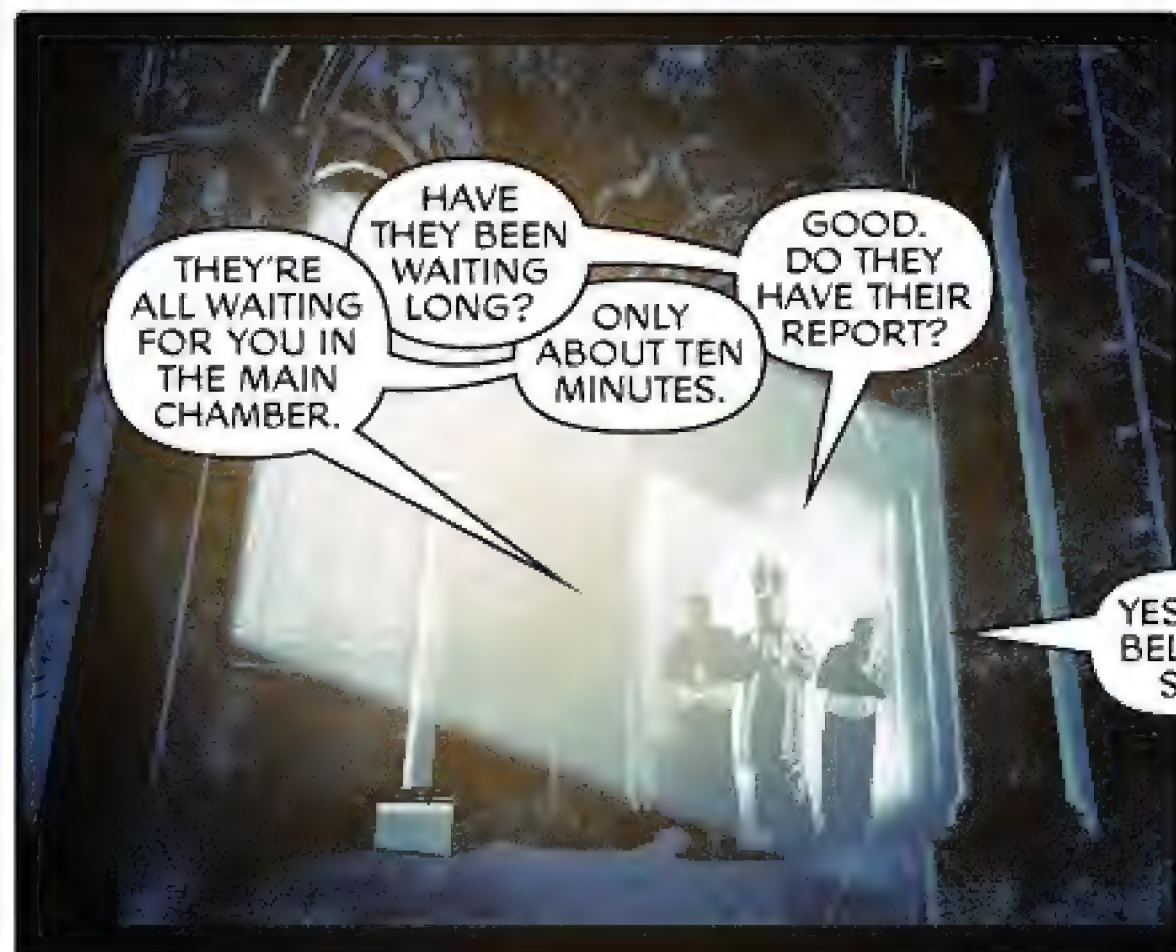
YOU WERE
ON LIFE SUPPORT
DURING YOUR
ENTIRE COMA.
AS FAR AS I CAN
TELL, YOU **NEVER**
DIED.



I DON'T KNOW
WHAT THAT MEANS
EXACTLY, OR WHAT
SIGNIFICANCE IT HAS TO
YOUR POWER LEVEL, BUT
IT'S DEFINITELY SOME-
THING. THAT'S PROBABLY
WHY MALEBOLGIA HAS
HIS SIGHTS SET
ON YOU...

EVEN IF HE
THINKS YOU'RE SIMMONS,
HE MUST SENSE YOUR NEW
POWER POTENTIAL. AND IF HE
FELT THAT IN HIS WEAKENED
STATE AS THE '**FREAK**' THEN
YOU AND/OR YOUR COSTUME
MUST BE DAMN NEAR
A WALKING
ATOMIC BOMB!





THEY'RE ALL WAITING FOR YOU IN THE MAIN CHAMBER.

HAVE THEY BEEN WAITING LONG?

ONLY ABOUT TEN MINUTES.

GOOD. DO THEY HAVE THEIR REPORT?

YES. WE BELIEVE SO.



YOUR EMINENCE. THANK YOU FOR MAKING THE TIME, ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE. WE'LL TRY TO MAKE THIS AS BRIEF AS POSSIBLE.

AS YOU KNOW, THERE IS AN EXTREMELY PRESSING MATTER UNFOLDING IN AMERICA. ONE WHICH WE'VE BEEN MONITORING QUITE CLOSELY, WITH ALL OUR MOST RELIABLE CONTACTS, BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CHURCH. AND WITHOUT OVERSTATING IT-- WE HAVE GRAVE CONCERNS ABOUT THIS SITUATION AND HOW IT MAY AFFECT YOUR POSITION.



THIS
"SITUATION"--
AS YOU CALL IT--
IS AN AFFRONT-- AN
AMERICAN PLOY TO
ONCE AGAIN DISCREDIT
PORTIONS OF THE
CHURCH-- AND WE
HOPE, MR. KENDALL,
THAT YOU'LL ADDRESS
IT IMMEDIATELY
IN ORDER TO
DISPEL ANY--

ACTUALLY,
FATHER-- THE
INFORMATION
WE'VE GATHERED SAYS
THAT THE HEALER WE'VE
BEEN INVESTIGATING-- A
MR. JIM DOWNING--
ISN'T A FRAUD.

IN FACT-- THOUGH
OUR INVESTIGATION IS STILL
IN THE EARLY STAGES-- I'M GOING
TO GO AS FAR AS TO SAY THAT THIS
PARTICULAR "SITUATION" DESERVES YOUR
FULL AND UNDIVIDED ATTENTION UNTIL WE'VE
DETERMINED WITH SOME DEGREE OF
CERTITUDE WHETHER MR. DOWNING IS
WITH US, OR AGAINST US.



YOU
TALK LIKE
HE'S SOME
KIND OF
THREAT.



HE IS. TO
EVERYTHING YOU
HOLD DEAR. WE
BELIEVE HE MIGHT
BE "THE SECOND
COMING."



YOU HIRED US FOR
OUR EXPERTISE AND NOW WE'RE
GIVING IT TO YOU. WE'VE FOUND NOTHING
TO DISPEL THE NOTION THAT ALL OF HIS
ACTIONS AREN'T TRUE SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATION.
AS YOU'LL READ IN OUR REPORT, WE'VE
DONE AN EXHAUSTIVE FOLLOW-UP WITH
SOME OF HIS DOCTORS AND MANY
OF THE EYE WITNESSES AT HIS
'HEALINGS.'

THAT'S
PREPOSTEROUS!

OUR JOB NOW IS TO
CONVINCE MR. DOWNING TO
ALIGN HIMSELF WITH THE CATHOLIC
CHURCH, AND GIVE HIS FULL SUPPORT
TO THE PONTIFF. WE'LL HAVE A MAJOR
PROBLEM ON OUR HANDS IF PEOPLE
THINK THEIR NEW MESSIAH IS
CONNECTED TO ANOTHER
RELIGION.



YOUR
HOLINESS--
WHAT IS YOUR
COMMAND?



FIND THIS
DOWNING AND
TELL HIM HE SHALL
HAVE HIS SALVATION
IN THE NAME OF *THE
FATHER, THE SON AND
THE HOLY SPIRIT*, AND
THAT OUR DOORS
ARE OPEN
TO HIM.

DO IT
WITH AS MUCH
SINCERITY AND
HUMILITY AS YOU CAN.
IF HE REFUSES-- MARK
HIM AS A *HERETIC* AND
ASSIGN HIM FOR
INQUISITION.



LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT-- THE DEVIL WANTS *ME* TO HELP *HIM* DESTROY EARTH. IS THAT RIGHT?

IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING... YES.

AND LET ME CORRECT YOU. MALEBOLGIA ISN'T *THE* DEVIL, HE'S A DEVIL. EACH CIRCLE HAS ONE OF ITS OWN. THINK OF IT AS SOME DEMONIC CORPORATE STRUCTURE.

WHERE'S THAT PUT YOU?

ATOP MALEBOLGIA'S SHITLIST.



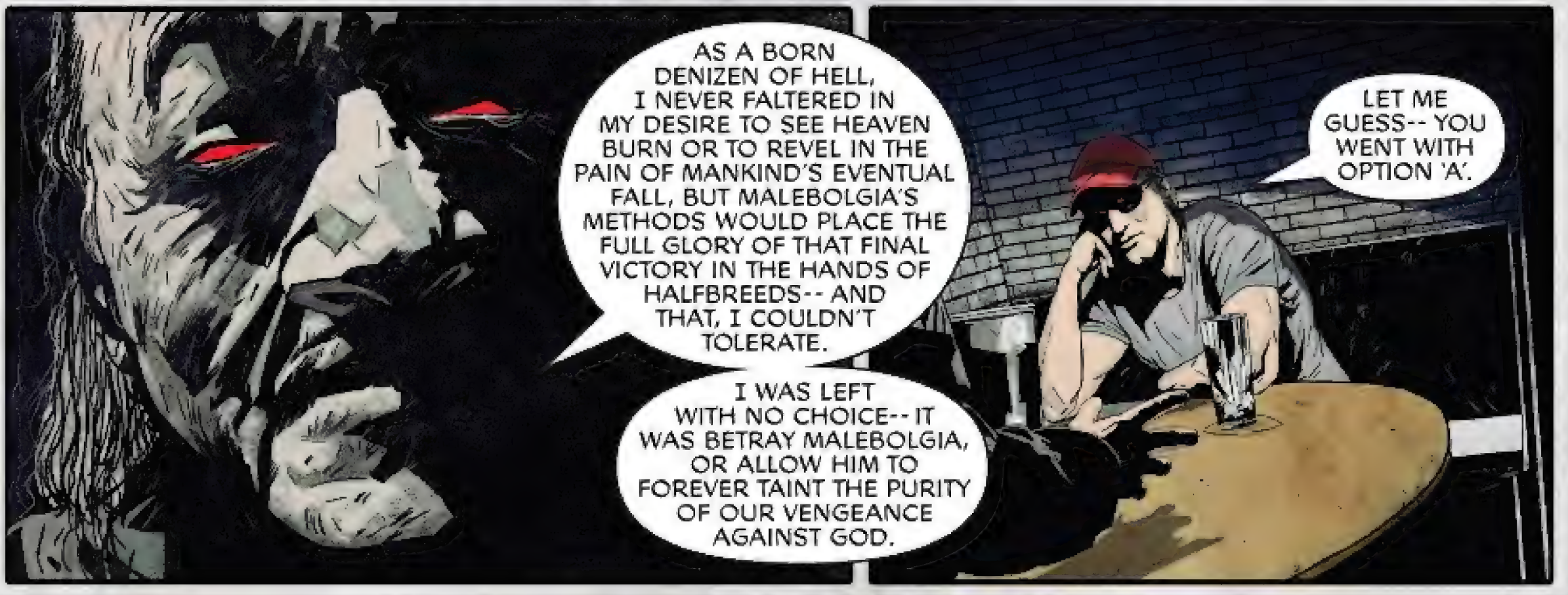
LIKE I'VE TOLD YOU, I WAS HIRED FOR THE PRESTIGIOUS JOB OF TESTING AND TRAINING HIS SPAWNS. AT NO POINT IN HIS INSTRUCTIONS TO ME DID HE EVER SAY NOT TO CONSORT WITH MY ENEMY. LIKE WE'RE DOING RIGHT NOW.

THAT'S TREASON IN HIS EYES. PUNISHABLE ONLY BY MY DEATH. I'M NOT ABOUT TO LET THAT HAPPEN. NOT WHEN I'VE GOTTEN SO CLOSE TO MY GOAL.

THAT WOULD BE?

TO ASSUME HIS THRONE, OF COURSE. AND TO CONTROL THE 8th CIRCLE, LIKE I SHOULD HAVE DONE EONS AGO.





AS A BORN
DENIZEN OF HELL,
I NEVER FALTERED IN
MY DESIRE TO SEE HEAVEN
BURN OR TO REVEL IN THE
PAIN OF MANKIND'S EVENTUAL
FALL, BUT MALEBOLGIA'S
METHODS WOULD PLACE THE
FULL GLORY OF THAT FINAL
VICTORY IN THE HANDS OF
HALFBREDS-- AND
THAT, I COULDN'T
TOLERATE.

I WAS LEFT
WITH NO CHOICE-- IT
WAS BETRAY MALEBOLGIA,
OR ALLOW HIM TO
FOREVER TAINT THE PURITY
OF OUR VENGEANCE
AGAINST GOD.

LET ME
GUESS-- YOU
WENT WITH
OPTION 'A'.

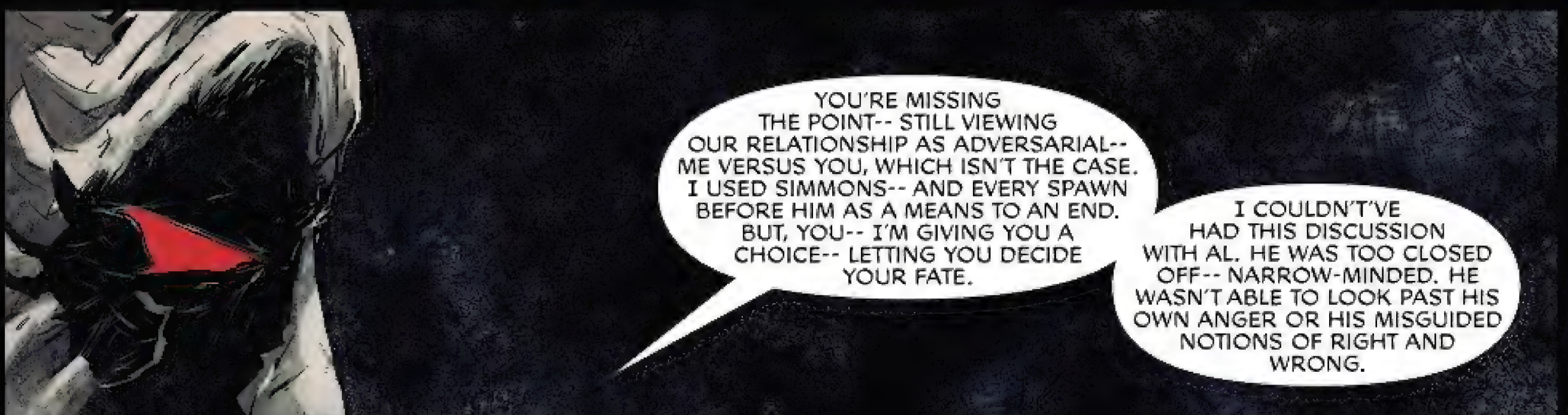


FOR ALL
THE GOOD
IT DID ME.

I USED
SIMMONS. I PUSHED
AND PRODDED HIM UNTIL
I HAD MY ASSASSIN. ONE
THAT WOULD TEACH
MALEBOLGIA A LESSON
BY DECAPITATING
HIM.

INSTEAD
I'M YOUR NEW
SIMMONS?
YOUR NEW
PUPPET?

NOT
SURE HOW
WELL THAT
SITS WITH ME,
CLOWN.



YOU'RE MISSING
THE POINT-- STILL VIEWING
OUR RELATIONSHIP AS ADVERSARIAL--
ME VERSUS YOU, WHICH ISN'T THE CASE.
I USED SIMMONS-- AND EVERY SPAWN
BEFORE HIM AS A MEANS TO AN END.
BUT, YOU-- I'M GIVING YOU A
CHOICE-- LETTING YOU DECIDE
YOUR FATE.

I COULDN'T'VE
HAD THIS DISCUSSION
WITH AL. HE WAS TOO CLOSED
OFF-- NARROW-MINDED. HE
WASN'T ABLE TO LOOK PAST HIS
OWN ANGER OR HIS MISGUIDED
NOTIONS OF RIGHT AND
WRONG.



WHAT I'M
OFFERING YOU,
HERE AND NOW,
IS THE CHANCE TO
BE ANYTHING BUT A
PUPPET, BECAUSE,
HERE'S THE
THING--

SIMMONS WAS
A MURDERER AND A
BASTARD WHEN HE WAS
HUMAN. HE NEVER UNDER-
STOOD THAT. HIS BLACK HEART
WAS THE REASON OUR MASTER
CHOSE HIM TO START WITH. BUT
HE SUCCEEDED AT ENDING
MALEBOLGIA'S REIGN OVER THE
8th CIRCLE.* AT LEAST
TEMPORARILY.

I ALWAYS THOUGHT
SIMMONS' VICTORY WAS
A LITTLE TOO EASY, THOUGH--
EVEN I FELL FOR IT, IN THE
BEGINNING, BECAUSE THERE WAS
A MAD SCRAM BY EVERYONE
VYING TO GRAB THE MANTLE
OF 'NEW KING.' IT WAS A
BLOODY MESS.

AND
LOYALTY BE
DAMNED!

EVEN ONE OF
MY OWN BROTHERS
WAS WILLING KILL ME FOR
A CHANCE AT THE THRONE--
BUT BEFORE I GUTTED HIM,
HE WHISPERED SOME-
THING. HE SAID, "HE'S
NOT GONE."

AT FIRST I
IGNORED IT-- BUT THEN
THINGS STARTED POPPING
UP. LITTLE THINGS. THINGS THAT
SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN HAPPENING.
ONLY RECENTLY WAS I ABLE
TO FIGURE OUT WHAT
IT ALL MEANT:

MALEBOLGIA
WAS GOING TO BE
COMING BACK--
EVENTUALLY.



THAT'S WHEN
I LEARNED ABOUT
HIS PLAN.

HE'D TAKEN HIS
POWERS AND SCATTERED THEM
RIGHT BEFORE HIS SUPPOSED
DEATH. HE KNEW SOMETHING WAS
GOING TO HAPPEN THAT DAY, SO
HE PROTECTED HIMSELF-- *IN
ADVANCE*-- BY SIPHONING OFF
PIECES OF HIMSELF AND HIDING
THEM HERE ON EARTH.

EACH
PIECE
BURIED
INSIDE ONE
OF HIS MOST
TRUSTED
SOLDIERS.

143-187



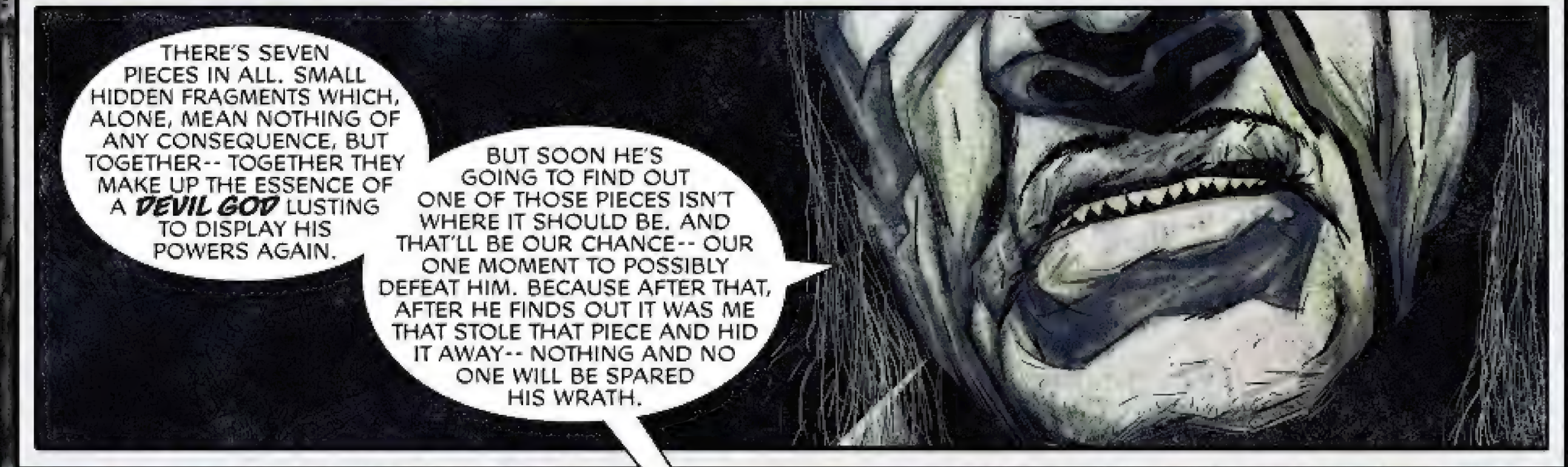
THOUGH
NOT ALL OF
THEM WERE
CAPABLE OF
ENDURING
THEIR HIDDEN
'GIFT.'



AND NOW HE'S
BEGUN PIECING
THEM BACK
TOGETHER. EACH
PART MAKING
HIM THAT MUCH
STRONGER.

THERE'S SEVEN
PIECES IN ALL. SMALL
HIDDEN FRAGMENTS WHICH,
ALONE, MEAN NOTHING OF
ANY CONSEQUENCE, BUT
TOGETHER-- TOGETHER THEY
MAKE UP THE ESSENCE OF
A *DEVIL GOD* LUSTING
TO DISPLAY HIS
POWERS AGAIN.

BUT SOON HE'S
GOING TO FIND OUT
ONE OF THOSE PIECES ISN'T
WHERE IT SHOULD BE. AND
THAT'LL BE OUR CHANCE-- OUR
ONE MOMENT TO POSSIBLY
DEFEAT HIM. BECAUSE AFTER THAT,
AFTER HE FINDS OUT IT WAS ME
THAT STOLE THAT PIECE AND HID
IT AWAY-- NOTHING AND NO
ONE WILL BE SPARED
HIS WRATH.



WHICH
IS WHY THE
PERSON NOW
HOLDING IT
DOESN'T EVEN
KNOW IT'S
THERE.





BUT THAT
WON'T
MATTER.

BECAUSE THE
VERY SECOND MALEBOLGIA
DISCOVERS A PIECE IS MISSING,
IT'LL BEGIN. HE'LL DESTROY EVERY-
THING IN HIS PATH WHILE HE LOOKS
FOR IT AND HE'LL BURN YOUR WORLD
TO THE GROUND. I'VE SEEN HIM DO IT
BEFORE. IT'S WHERE THE SAYING
'SCORCHED EARTH' COMES FROM.
NOTHING AND NO ONE WILL BE LEFT
STANDING! AND I'M TELLING YOU,
HE WON'T STOP UNTIL
HE FINDS IT.

YOU DON'T WANT
TO LIKE ME, FINE. BUT
SURELY THERE MUST BE
OTHERS IN YOUR LIFE YOU WANT
TO SEE LIVE. IF SO, THEN JOIN
ME **DAMN IT!!**

THAT'S IT. THAT'S
MY PITCH. I'M A F**CKER
AND WON'T APOLOGIZE FOR IT.
WHEN THE DAY COMES I'LL GLEEFULLY
STAND ON GOD'S THROAT AND
THANK HIM FOR ALL THE YEARS OF
FUN HE'S GIVEN ME. FOR CREATING
ALL THE HUMANS I KILLED ALONG
THE WAY. AND I WON'T
HAVE AN OUNCE OF
GUILT ABOUT IT.

SO, THERE'S YOUR
CHOICES. TAKE UP WITH ME--
AND MY ARMY OF DEMONS
IN ORDER TO SAVE THE WORLD OR
TRY AND DO SOMETHING ON YOUR
OWN. WHICH IS A DEATH SENTENCE
FOR EVERYONE! MYSELF
INCLUDED! IT'S TIME TO PICK
YOUR POISON!



F**K
YOU,
CLOWN!





YOU
WISH!



BESIDES, YOU'RE
THE ONE THAT WANTED
ALL THIS HONESTY
BULLSHIT-- AND NOW THAT
I'VE GIVEN IT TO YOU YOU'RE
GOING TO WHAT? RUN
AWAY? BECAUSE YOU'RE
NOT **MAN ENOUGH** TO
HANDLE IT!?

THAT'S
RIGHT!
BESIDES,
IF YOUR
BOSS--

**OUR
BOSS! YOU
HAVEN'T BEEN
LISTENING?! HE
CREATED BOTH
OF US!**

FINE! IF "**OUR**"
BOSS IS SUPPOSED
TO BE AS BIG A THREAT
TO YOU, ME, AND EVERY
DAMN THING HE
TOUCHES-- AS YOU SAY--
WHY WAIT 'TIL NOW TO
BRING IT UP? WHY WAIT
UNTIL WE'RE IN THIS
POSITION TO SAY ANY-
THING ABOUT ANY
OF THIS?

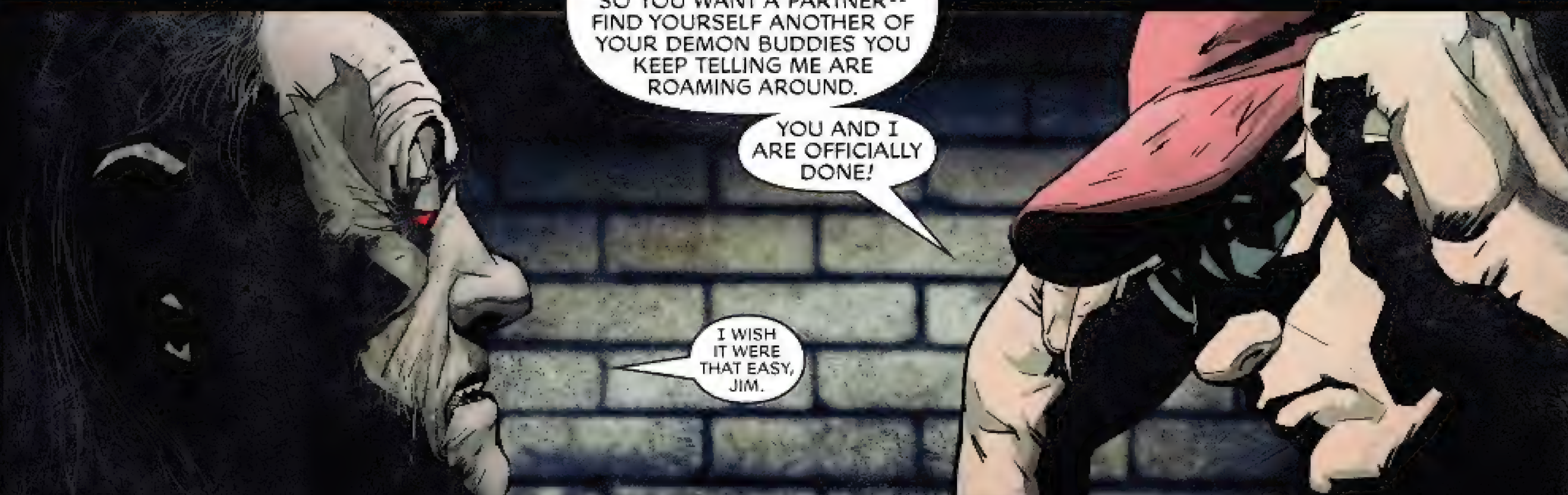


AND
BEFORE YOU
ANSWER--
DON'T!

BECAUSE THERE
ISN'T ANYTHING YOU
COULD POSSIBLY SAY THAT
WOULD EXCUSE THAT MISTAKE.
SO YOU WANT A PARTNER--
FIND YOURSELF ANOTHER OF
YOUR DEMON BUDDIES YOU
KEEP TELLING ME ARE
ROAMING AROUND.

YOU AND I
ARE OFFICIALLY
DONE!

I WISH
IT WERE
THAT EASY,
JIM.





SO, IN KEEPING WITH THE THEME OF THE EVENING, HERE'S THE TRUTH-- IF WE PART WAYS: YOU GO LEFT. I GO RIGHT-- THAT WON'T END IT NOT BY A LONG SHOT. I'LL FIND NEW METHODS WITH WHICH TO MOTIVATE YOU. METHODS YOU WON'T LIKE. METHODS THAT MIGHT EVEN HURT THOSE WHO HANG AROUND YOU.

BY THE WAY, HOW ARE SARA AND MARC DOING THESE DAYS?



FINE. THEY'RE **BOTH** FINE! YOU'D BETTER HOPE THEY STAY THAT WAY.

OHHH! SEEMS I'VE HIT A NERVE. THAT SHOULDN'T SURPRISE YOU.

BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT I DO, JIM-- I **ENCOURAGE** PEOPLE. GENTLY NUDGE THEM TO LOOK PAST THEIR EMOTIONS AND FACE THE COLD, HARD FACT OF REALITY. IF THAT DOESN'T WORK, THERE'S A HIGH PROBABILITY THAT SOMEONE THEY CARE FOR ACCIDENTALLY DISAPPEARS.



IT'S NOT SOMETHING I WANT. AND, BELIEVE ME-- YOU DON'T EITHER. I'M NOT MAKING ANY THREATS-- JUST BEING STRAIGHT WITH YOU.



AND NOT THAT YOU GIVE A CRAP, BUT AS MUCH AS YOU DISLIKE THE THOUGHT OF PARTNERING UP WITH ME-- YOU CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE HOW DESPERATE I MUST BE TO EVEN THINK OF JOINING FORCES WITH A SPAWN.

SADLY... NEITHER OF US HAS A CHOICE.

SO, JIM WHAT'S IT GOING TO BE?



I'LL
HELP.

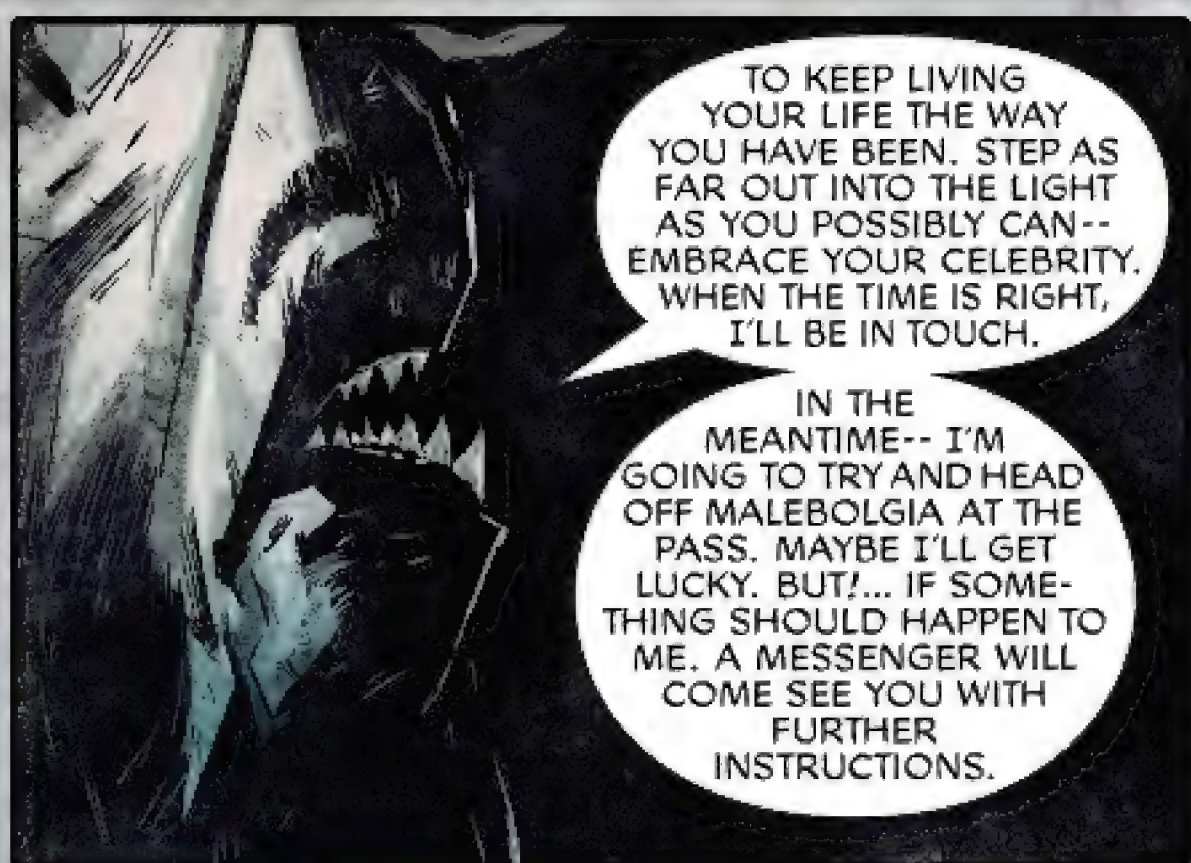
FOR NOW, BUT
ONLY BECAUSE I STILL
NEED ANSWERS. AND I THINK
YOU'RE KEEPING MORE FROM ME
THAN YOU'RE LETTING ON-- ABOUT
WHO I AM, ABOUT MY POWERS.
ABOUT **EVERYTHING!** BUT THE SECOND
WE'RE CLEAR OF THIS MESS-- ONCE
MALEBOLGIA'S DEAD, AND I HAVE
MY LIFE BACK TOGETHER-- YOU
AND ME, WE'RE GONNA HAVE
ANOTHER **SERIOUS** HEART-
TO-HEART TALK.



ONLY
SEEMS
FAIR.



WHAT
DO YOU
NEED FROM
ME THEN?



TO KEEP LIVING
YOUR LIFE THE WAY
YOU HAVE BEEN. STEP AS
FAR OUT INTO THE LIGHT
AS YOU POSSIBLY CAN--
EMBRACE YOUR CELEBRITY.
WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT,
I'LL BE IN TOUCH.

IN THE
MEANTIME-- I'M
GOING TO TRY AND HEAD
OFF MALEBOLGIA AT THE
PASS. MAYBE I'LL GET
LUCKY. BUT!... IF SOME-
THING SHOULD HAPPEN TO
ME. A MESSENGER WILL
COME SEE YOU WITH
FURTHER
INSTRUCTIONS.



YOU'VE
MADE THE
RIGHT
DECISION,
JIM.

AND
THOUGH
YOU DON'T SEE IT
NOW-- I'M **TELLING**
YOU-- WE'RE THE
GOOD GUYS
HERE!



**KNOK
KNOK**



MA'AM?

HELLO, MA'AM?
MY NAME IS DETECTIVE
ROWAND. I'M ON SPECIAL
ASSIGNMENT WITH THE N.Y.P.D.
AND WE RECEIVED A CALL FROM
SOME FRIENDS OF YOURS
WHO ARE WORRIED ABOUT
YOUR SAFETY.

IF YOU'RE HOME,
SARA, PLEASE OPEN THE
DOOR. I'D LIKE TO CONFIRM
THAT YOU'RE OKAY-- AND,
IF YOU'RE UP TO IT, I HAVE
SOME QUESTIONS I'D LIKE
TO ASK YOU ABOUT
MR. DOWNING.



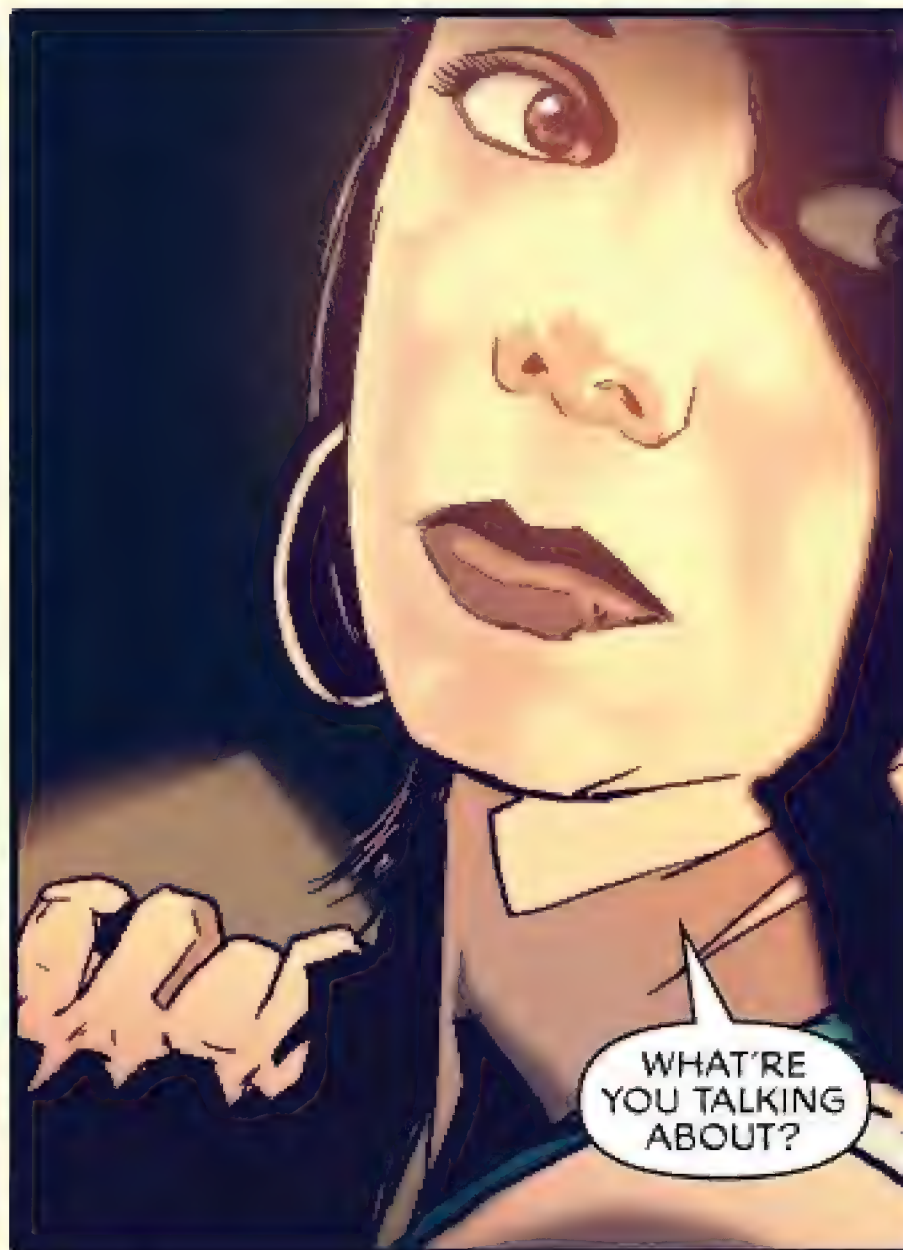
MA'AM?
YOU
THERE?

DON'T
ANSWER
IT.



I KNOW
YOU'RE AFRAID,
SARA. I SCARED YOU
THE OTHER NIGHT. I WAS
WRONG TO DO THAT.
BUT I NEED YOUR HELP.
YOUR SUPPORT.

I CAN'T DO
THIS ALONE
ANYMORE.



WHAT'RE
YOU TALKING
ABOUT?



JUST
COME WITH
ME...

I'M ABOUT TO
**CHANGE THE
WORLD.**

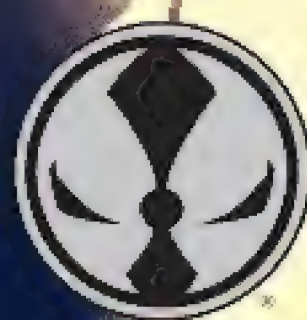


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213
DIGITAL EDITION

SPAWN



Two weeks ago.



C.I.A. SUBSTATION.
NEW YORK CITY.

YOU
ASKED TO
SEE ME,
DIRECTOR
KURTZ?



I DID. THANK YOU FOR
YOUR PROMPTNESS, AGENT KRUGER.
AND BEFORE WE BEGIN-- YOU UNDER-
STAND I'LL DENY THIS CONVERSATION
EVER TOOK PLACE.

UNDERSTOOD.

BECAUSE AS FAR
AS THIS DEPARTMENT KNOWS,
OUR SUBJECT HAS ALREADY
BEEN ERASED.

YES, DIRECTOR.

I NEED
TO BE ABLE
TO TRUST YOU
EXPLICITLY WITH
THIS SENSITIVE
MATTER.

YOU CAN.



GOOD.

SO HERE'S
WHAT WE'RE UP
AGAINST. A SITUATION
HAS COME UP-- ONE
THAT COULD QUICKLY
TURN INTO A HUGE
PROBLEM. YOUR
SPECIAL TALENTS
ARE REQUIRED.

DO YOU
KNOW WHAT
THIS IS,
KRUGER?



YES, MA'AM.
I'VE ALREADY BEEN
FULLY BRIEFED ON
THE "DOWNING"
OPERATION.

NOT ALL OF IT. YOU
SEE, TWO DAYS AGO, A
MR. MARC ROSEN--

DOWNING'S
PERSONAL
MANAGER.

YES, DOWNING'S
MANAGER. HE'S A FAILED
REPORTER WITH MORE THAN A
FEW MEDIA CONTACTS IN HIS BACK
POCKET. TWO DAYS AGO, MR. ROSEN
SENT THIS PHOTO-- A PHOTO NOBODY,
MYSELF INCLUDED, SHOULD'VE EVEN
KNOWN EXISTED, MUCH LESS
HAD ACCESS TO. HE SENT IT TO A
SELECT GROUP OF INVESTIGATIVE
REPORTERS ACROSS THE
COUNTRY.

WHAT HAD BEEN,
FOR VERY SPECIFIC REASONS,
A LONG DORMANT FILE, WITH
A SUBJECT LONG FORGOTTEN,
HAS NOW SUDDENLY COME
AWAKE. I NEED YOU TO PUT
IT BACK TO SLEEP.

I'LL DO WHAT NEEDS
TO BE DONE.

I KNOW
YOU WILL.
THAT'S WHY
YOU WERE
PICKED.

THE SEVERITY
OF WHAT THIS
PICTURE REPRESENTS
HAS BECOME MY
TOP PRIORITY.

WHAT I NEED
FROM YOU IS THAT
YOU MAKE SURE THIS
SITUATION COMES TO
AN APPROPRIATE
CONCLUSION.



Eleven days ago.

CLEVELAND,
OHIO.



Nine days ago.

CHICAGO,
ILLINOIS.



Five days ago.

HOUSTON,
TEXAS.



Two days ago.

LOS ANGELES,
CALIFORNIA.



Today.

BALTIMORE,
MARYLAND.

C'MON, STOP WIGGLING. I NEED TO GET THIS TIE STRAIGHT.

IF I DIDN'T KNOW ANY BETTER, I'D SWEAR YOU WERE NERVOUS... THOUGH I CAN'T IMAGINE WHY!

CUT THE SARCASM. YOU'VE MADE IT PERFECTLY CLEAR YOU THINK I'M CRAZY FOR DOING THIS IN THE FIRST PLACE, BUT I CAN'T GO ON LIVING THE WAY I AM.

I KNOW. I'M JUST GIVING YOU A HARD TIME. DON'T WORRY, I'VE GOT YOUR BACK ON THIS. WE'LL MAKE IT WORK-- ONCE WE FIND THE FUNDING-- BUT YOU'RE RIGHT, IT'S YOUR LIFE, AND THOUGH I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT YOU'VE BEEN GOING THROUGH, YOU'RE THE ONE THAT'S BEEN PUTTING UP WITH ALL THIS CRAP, NOT ME.

SO I'M COMPLETELY ON YOUR SIDE.

THANKS. I APPRECIATE YOU SAYING THAT. REALLY.

IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'M GOING TO STAY BACK HERE WHILE YOU DO YOUR THING. I DON'T WANT THERE TO BE ANY DISTRACTIONS TO WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO GET ACROSS. BESIDES, I'M ADDICTED TO MY PHONE AND CAN'T LEAVE IT ALONE FOR TWO SECONDS, AND I WOULDN'T WANT YOU TO THINK I WASN'T PAYING ATTENTION.

THAT'S FINE. DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO. I'LL SEE YOU WHEN IT'S ALL OVER.

COOL! AND NOT THAT I'M A WORRY-WART OR ANYTHING, BUT I TOLD SUSAN NOT TO LET YOU OUT OF HER SIGHT. RIGHT, SUSAN?

AYE-AYE, CAPTAIN.

CUTE.

YOU CAN DO THIS, JIM. GOOD LUCK TO YOU.



I'M GOING TO DOUBLE-CHECK TO MAKE SURE EVERYTHING IS SET UP PROPERLY. WE'VE GOT TEN MINUTES 'TIL **SHOWTIME!** I'LL DO A QUICK INTRO, THEN YOU CAN COME OUT.



DOES HIS NEUROTIC, PERFECTIONIST BEHAVIOR EVER GET YOU?

EVERY SECOND OF EVERY DAY.



I'M PROUD OF WHAT YOU'RE DOING, JIM. I DON'T KNOW IF I'VE MADE THAT CLEAR WITH ALL THE INSANITY SWIRLING AROUND. I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO SPEND ALL THE TIME I'D LIKE WITH YOU.

MAYBE... I DON'T KNOW, MAYBE LATER WHEN MARC'S OFF DOING HIS THING, WE COULD GET TOGETHER...?



LOOK, I'M REALLY FLATTERED BY ALL YOUR ATTENTION. IT'S HELPED MY EGO IMMENSELY, BUT WE CAN'T DO THIS. IT'S NOT FAIR TO YOU AND IT'S NOT FAIR TO MARC. IT'D BREAK HIS HEART IF HE KNEW WHAT WE DID.

I... GUESS.

THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO TO CHANGE YOUR MIND?

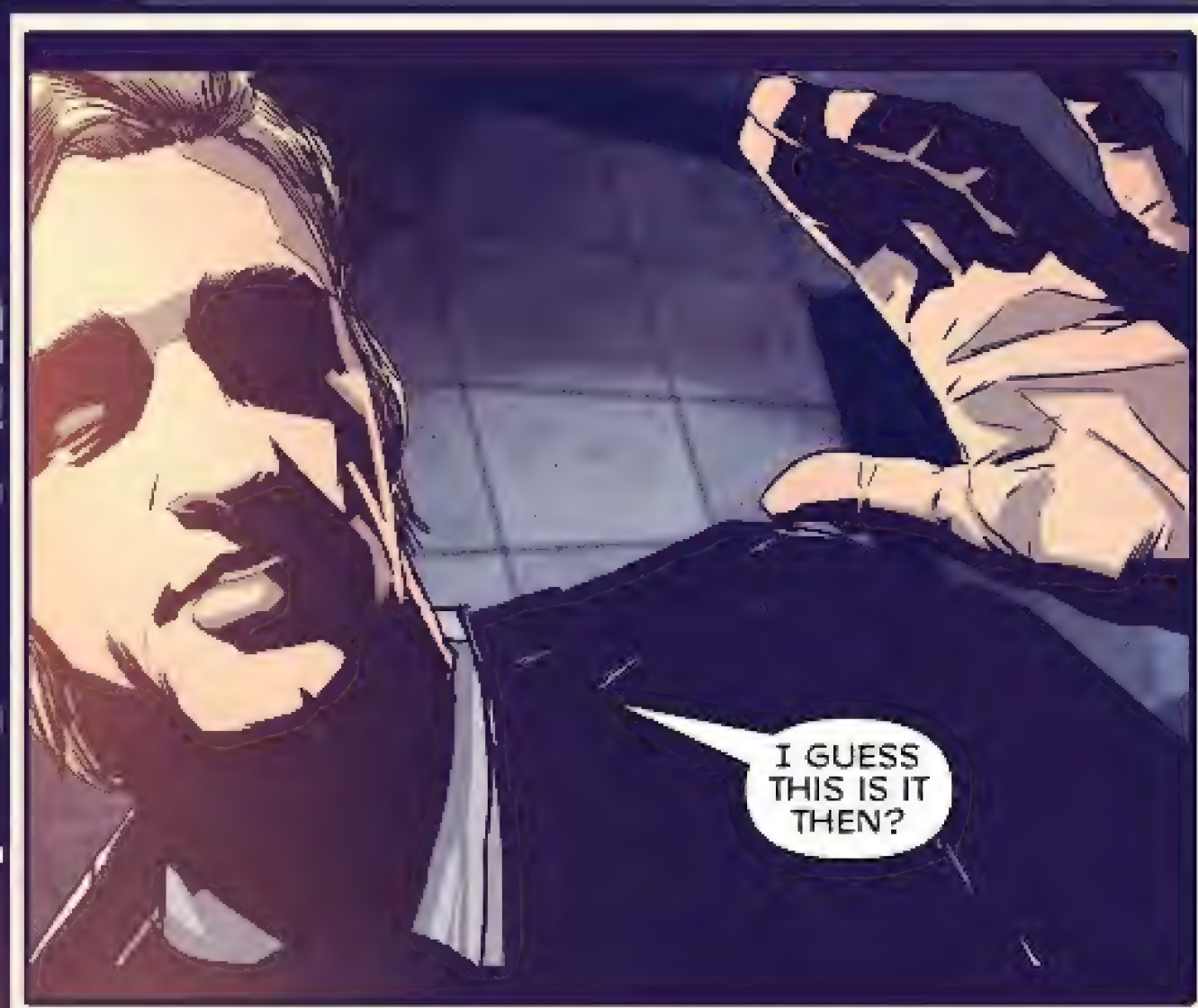


NO.

YOU'RE A WONDERFUL, VIBRANT, SEXY WOMAN, BUT WE MADE A MISTAKE. WE OWE IT TO EVERYONE NOT TO DO THAT AGAIN. DOES THAT MAKE SENSE?

YOU'RE RIGHT. YOU NEED TO FOCUS NOW. I'M SORRY.

DON'T BE.



snap snap snap clik snap
clik clik snap
snap
clik

GOOD AFTERNOON, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. I'D LIKE TO START BY THANKING EACH OF YOU FOR BEING HERE. I'M SURE ALL OF YOU ARE QUITE BUSY, AND I APPRECIATE YOUR HELP IN GETTING ACROSS WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SAY.

AS MOST OF YOU MAY ALREADY KNOW, MY NAME IS JIM DOWNING. THOUGH, TO BE HONEST, I CAN'T SAY WITH CERTAINTY THAT IT IS MY ACTUAL NAME.

WHICH IS ONE OF THE REASONS I'M HERE TODAY.





BUT, THE BIGGER REASON IS TO ANNOUNCE-- BEGINNING TODAY-- THE DEVELOPMENT STAGES OF A NEW FOUNDATION.



ITS GOAL WILL BE TO HELP THOSE WHOSE CONDITIONS ARE BEYOND THE REACH OF MAINSTREAM MEDICINE.

WE INTEND TO FUNCTION IN BROAD PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MEDICAL ESTABLISHMENT.

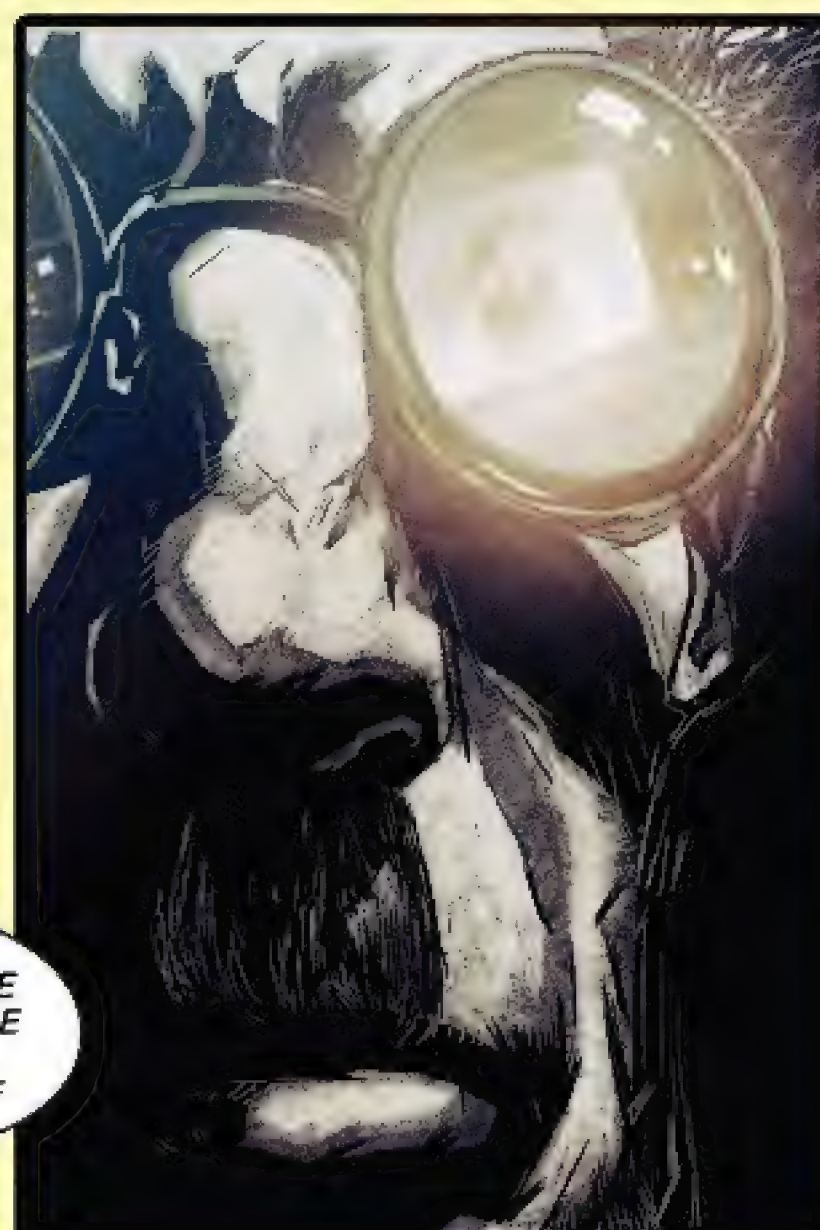


INITIALLY, WE WILL CONSULT WITH A BATTERY OF SPECIALISTS, WHO WILL VERIFY THE SAFETY OF MY SPECIAL POWERS ON OTHERS.



ONCE WE GET CLEARANCE, I WILL CREATE A SYSTEM ALLOWING PEOPLE IN NEED OF MY ABILITIES TO BE CHOSEN FOR PARTICIPATION.

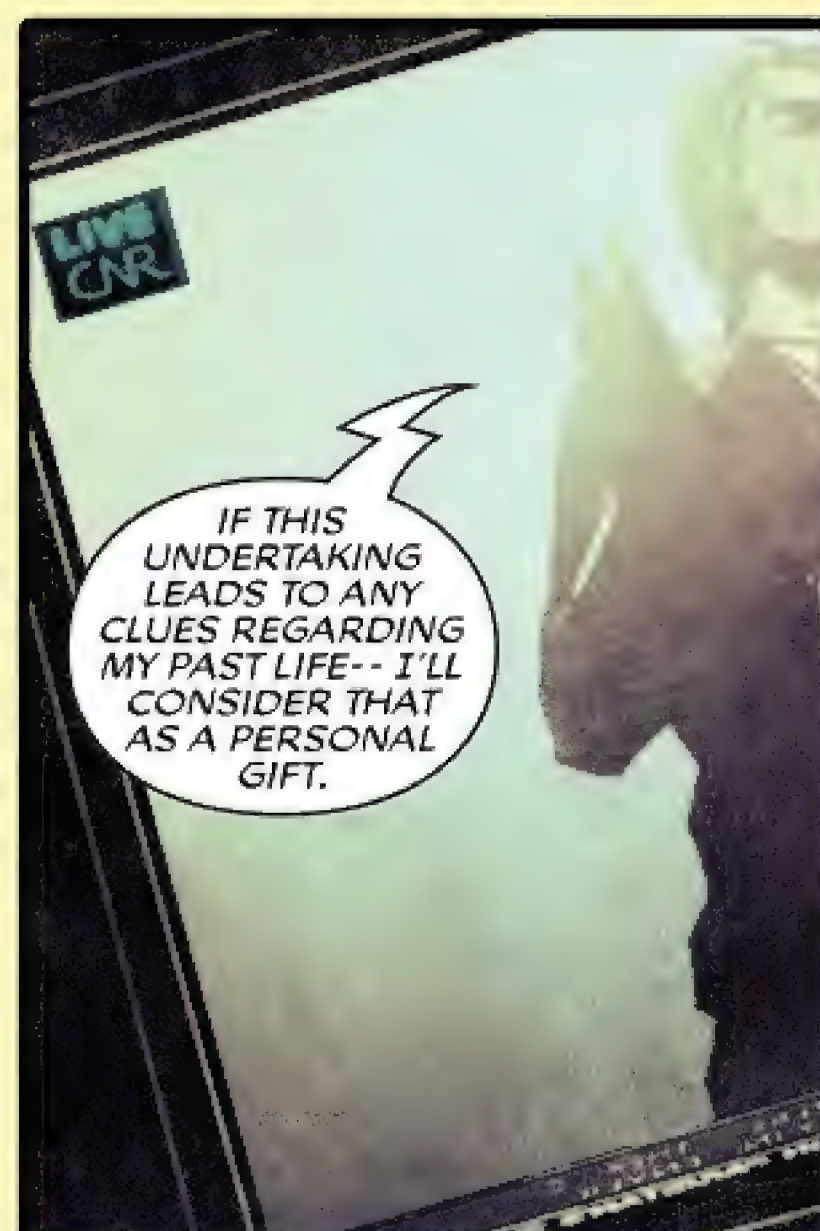
I'M DOING THIS TO GIVE MYSELF A PURPOSE IN LIFE... A PURPOSE I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR SINCE COMING OUT OF MY COMA.



SOME OF YOU HAVE REPORTED LATELY THAT I'VE BEEN IN HIDING. IT'S ACTUALLY BEEN MORE OF A PERSONAL RETREAT.



IT BECAME CLEAR TO ME THAT, BY EMBRACING MY NEW LIFE, AND EXPANDING ITS REACH, I COULD HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON PEOPLE IN NEED.



IF THIS UNDERTAKING LEADS TO ANY CLUES REGARDING MY PAST LIFE-- I'LL CONSIDER THAT AS A PERSONAL GIFT.



I'D NOW LIKE TO LAY OUT THE BROAD PARAMETERS OF OUR PROGRAM...



HE'S
REALLY
GOOD.

deeDEET
diDEET

NOW
WHAT?!



HELLO.

MARC?

YEAH.
WHO IS
THIS? I'M
KIND OF
BUSY
NOW.



IT'S GARY...
GARY WHALEN.
AND, UH-- I WAS
JUST-- HEH-- JUST
CALLIN' ABOUT THAT
THING-- THE PICTURE,
YA KNOW? THAT
PHOTO YOU SENT
OVER--*

GARY--
SHIT. HOLD ON
A SECOND, I
NEED TO STEP
OUTSIDE.

*See Issue 202-- Todd



SUSAN--
I'VE GOTTA
TAKE THIS.
I'LL BE RIGHT
BACK.



MAKE MY
DAY AND TELL
ME YOU'VE GOT
SOMETHING FOR
ME, BUD!

YEAH,
MARC...
I'VE GOT
SOMETHING.
SOMETHING
BIG!
BUT--



WE NEED TO MEET. IN PERSON.



MEET? GARY, I TOLD YOU I'M BUSY. JUST GIVE IT TO ME, MAN. TELL ME WHAT YOU FOUND.

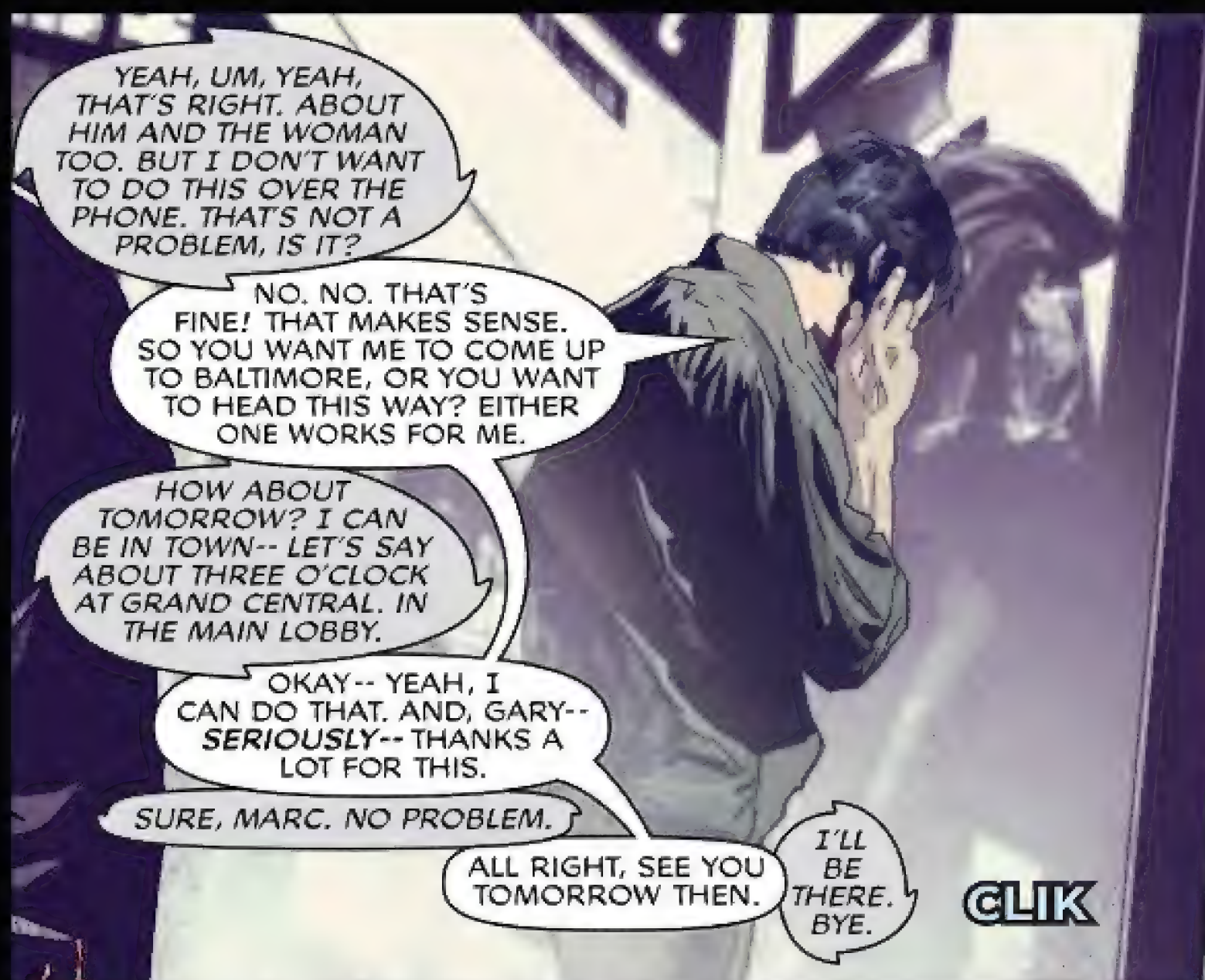
I CAN'T. NOT OVER THE PHONE-- AND NO-- UH-- NO E-MAILS EITHER.

WHY? WHAT'S UP?

NOTHING. IT'S JUST-- YOUR FRIEND-- I CAME ACROSS SOMETHING-- INFO YOU'LL WANT TO SEE YOURSELF. ON THE PHOTO, AND SOME STUFF ON WHO HE IS-- OR WHO HE MIGHT BE.



YOU SERIOUS? YOU FOUND SOMETHING ON JIM? SOMETHING PRE-COMA?



YEAH, UM, YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT. ABOUT HIM AND THE WOMAN TOO. BUT I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS OVER THE PHONE. THAT'S NOT A PROBLEM, IS IT?

NO. NO. THAT'S FINE! THAT MAKES SENSE. SO YOU WANT ME TO COME UP TO BALTIMORE, OR YOU WANT TO HEAD THIS WAY? EITHER ONE WORKS FOR ME.

HOW ABOUT TOMORROW? I CAN BE IN TOWN-- LET'S SAY ABOUT THREE O'CLOCK AT GRAND CENTRAL. IN THE MAIN LOBBY.

OKAY-- YEAH, I CAN DO THAT. AND, GARY-- SERIOUSLY-- THANKS A LOT FOR THIS.

SURE, MARC. NO PROBLEM.

ALL RIGHT, SEE YOU TOMORROW THEN.

I'LL BE THERE. BYE.

CLIK



I... I DID WHAT YOU ASKED. NOW, PLEASE-- I'VE TOLD YOU I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING.



BLAM



MA'AM? THE FINAL TARGET HAS BEEN ELIMINATED. ALL FILES HAVE BEEN WIPED. AND THE MEETING HAS BEEN SET. INITIATING OPERATION: JUDAS ON YOUR GO-AHEAD.

PROCEED, AGENT KRUGER.



...NOT BE
TAKING QUESTIONS,
BUT WILL FOLLOW UP
WITH A PRESS RELEASE THAT
WILL PROVIDE A FULL SET
OF DETAILS.



THANK
YOU
FOR YOUR
TIME.



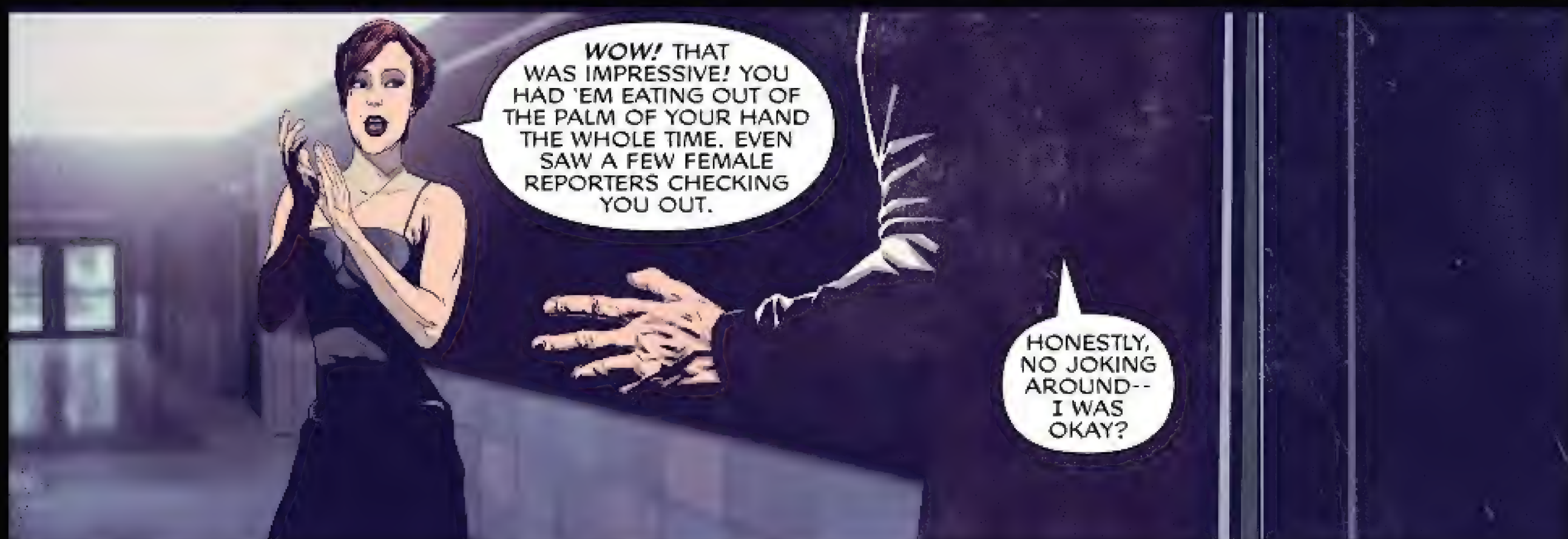
JIM?

MR.
DOWNING?

MR.
DOWNING,
PLEASE?

JIM?

MR.
DOWNING?



WOW! THAT
WAS IMPRESSIVE! YOU
HAD 'EM EATING OUT OF
THE PALM OF YOUR HAND
THE WHOLE TIME. EVEN
SAW A FEW FEMALE
REPORTERS CHECKING
YOU OUT.

HONESTLY,
NO JOKING
AROUND--
I WAS
OKAY?



OH,
PLEASE--
YOU'RE A
NATURAL UP
THERE. IT'S LIKE
YOU CAST A SPELL
OVER THEM
OR SOME-
THING.

THANKS.
I WAS A BIT
NERVOUS, BUT I
REALLY APPRECIATE
THE SUPPORT YOU,
MARC AND SARA
HAVE--



SPEAKING
OF WHICH...
WHERE IS SHE?
I KIND OF
FIGURED SARA
WOULD'VE BEEN
HERE TODAY.

SHE'S
PRETTY BUSY,
UPSTATE. I
HAVEN'T TALKED
TO HER
SINCE LAST
WEEK.

A week earlier.



DID YOU
HEAR
ME?

I SAID
I WANT
TO MAKE A
DIFFERENCE.
I WANT TO
USE MY
POWERS
FOR SOME-
THING
GOOD.

SARA...?

WHAT'S
WRONG?

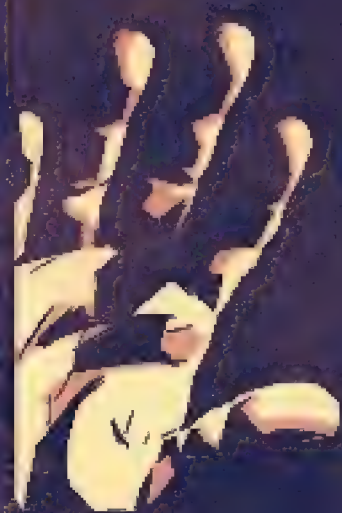
YOUR POWERS.
HOW CAN YOU
CONTROL SOMETHING
WHEN YOU DON'T
EVEN KNOW HOW IT
WORKS? NOT THE
GOOD STUFF. NOT THE
SAVING PEOPLE'S
LIVES STUFF.

THE DARK
PART. THE
THING YOU
TOOK ME INTO.
WHERE'S
THAT COME
FROM?

IF YOU'RE
ASKING HOW
IT ALL WORKS--
YOU'RE RIGHT,
I DON'T KNOW.
NOT EVERYTHING.
BUT I CAN'T
LET THAT STOP
ME.



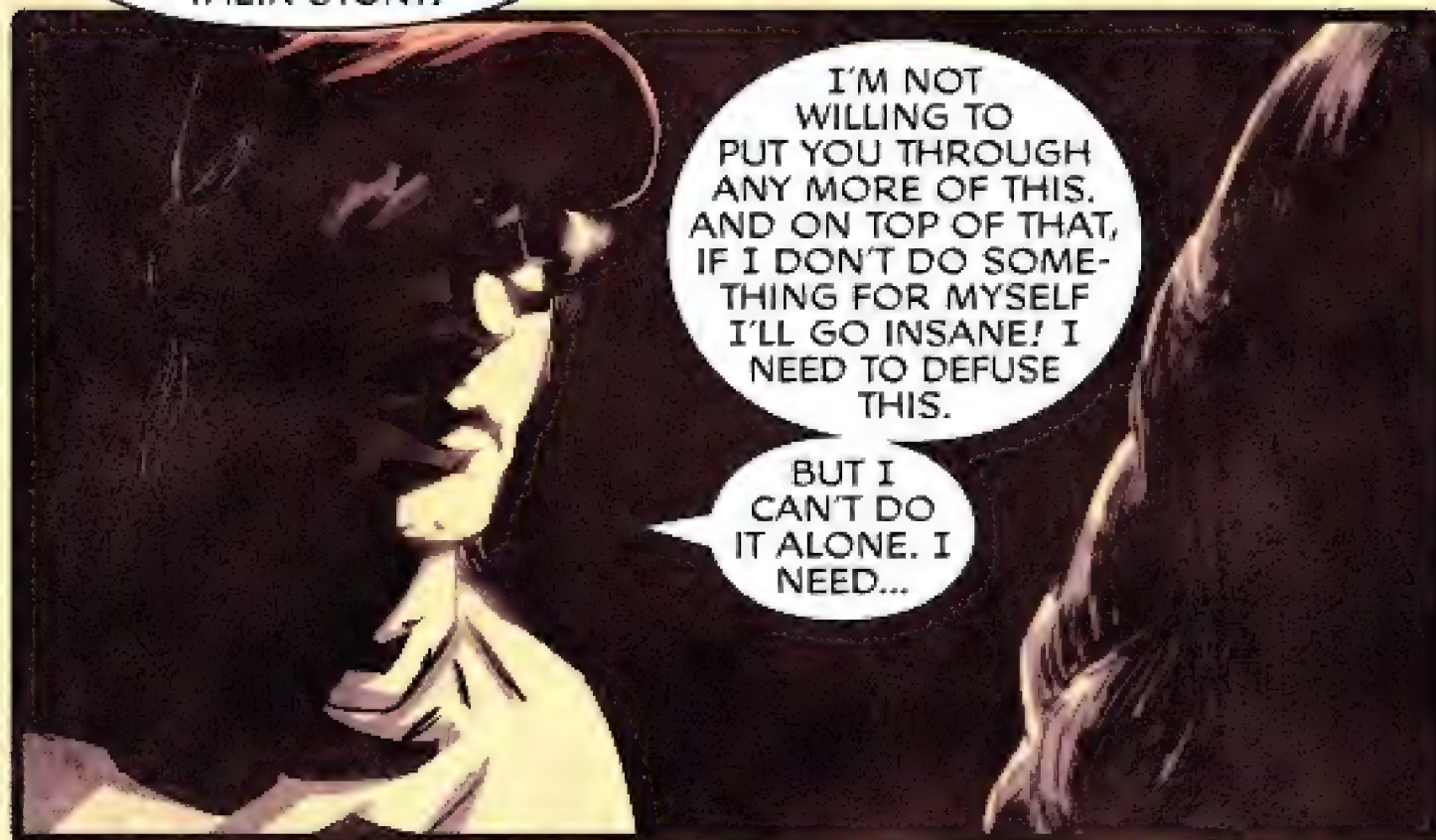
I'M NOT WILLING
TO WAIT AROUND
WHILE EVERYONE TRIES TO
CHASE US DOWN-- TRYING
TO FIGURE OUT WHAT
THE HELL I AM.



WHY?



WHAT DO YOU MEAN, WHY? BECAUSE IF I DON'T, THEY WON'T REST UNTIL THEY GET THEIR STORY!



I'M NOT WILLING TO PUT YOU THROUGH ANY MORE OF THIS. AND ON TOP OF THAT, IF I DON'T DO SOMETHING FOR MYSELF I'LL GO INSANE! I NEED TO DEFUSE THIS.

BUT I CAN'T DO IT ALONE. I NEED...



I'M LEAVING.

WHAT? WHY?



THERE'S A JOB-- IT'S OUT OF TOWN. I'VE BEEN TRYING TO FIND STEADY WORK SINCE THE HOSPITAL BURNED DOWN AND THIS PLACE, THEY'RE WILLING TO GIVE ME FULL-TIME WORK. AT LEAST ON A TRIAL BASIS.



WHEN ARE YOU COMING BACK?

WHEN IT'S TIME. GOD WILL LET ME KNOW.

THIS IS BECAUSE OF ME, ISN'T IT? AND WHAT I DID TO YOU?

NO. YES. I DON'T KNOW. MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT.

WHEN YOU WERE IN YOUR COMA, I DREAMED ABOUT YOU EVERY NIGHT. I PRAYED TO GOD THAT HE WOULD WATCH OVER YOU AND DELIVER YOU BACK TO US, BECAUSE IN MY HEART I KNEW YOU WERE SPECIAL. THAT YOU WEREN'T LIKE THE REST. BUT-- AND I HATE MYSELF FOR SAYING THIS-- THERE'S SOMETHING NOT QUITE RIGHT ABOUT ALL OF THIS.

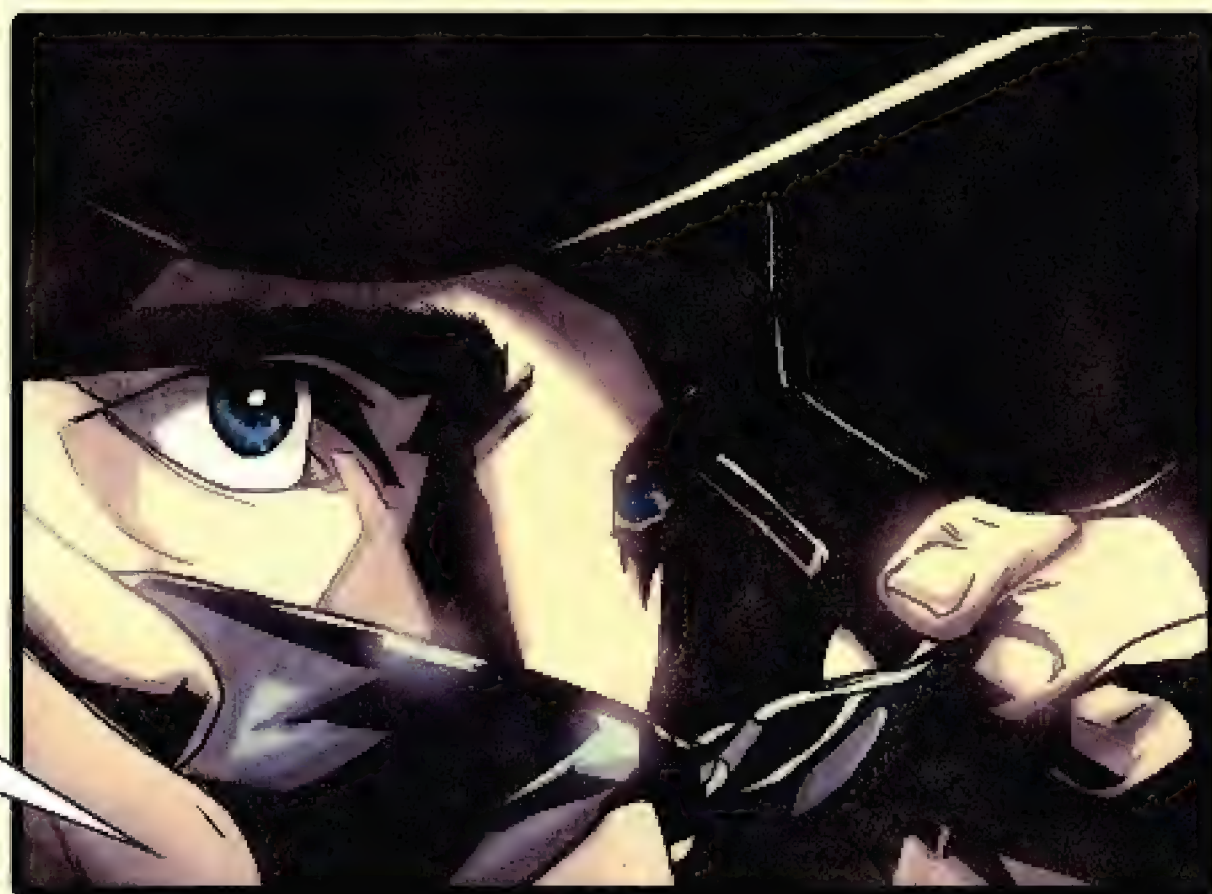
WHAT YOU DID THE OTHER NIGHT... TAKING US FROM THE ALLEYS BACK TO HERE?! WHAT YOU DID... THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! AND I CAN'T FIGURE OUT IF THAT'S A GOOD OR BAD THING.

HOW DOES ALL THIS WORK? YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE. IT JUST DOES. I WAS TRYING TO PROTECT YOU. NOT SCARE YOU.

BUT YOU DID.

I KNOW,
AND I'LL HAVE
TO LIVE WITH MYSELF,
KNOWING HOW MUCH
PAIN I'M PUTTING YOU
THROUGH. BUT IF IT
MAKES YOU FEEL ANY
BETTER-- SOME OF THE
STUFF I CAN DO
SCARES THE CRAP OUT
OF ME, TOO. TO THE
POINT WHERE I
CAN'T SLEEP AT
NIGHT.

AND IF I
DON'T DO SOME-
THING ABOUT IT,
I DON'T KNOW HOW
MUCH MORE I'M
GOING TO BE ABLE TO
TAKE. YOU'VE TOLD
ME THAT YOU THINK
OF YOURSELF AS AN
OUTSIDER. WELL, I
AM TOO. BECAUSE I
UNDERSTAND HOW
LONELY THAT
CAN BE.





SO YOU F*CKED HER TOO, THEN?*

WHAT?!

SARA'S NOT TALKING TO YOU, SO I'M GUESSING YOU DID THE 'PUMP AND DUMP' WITH HER TOO. SEEMS TO BE YOUR M.O.

BUT THAT'S FINE. I'M NOT JEALOUS. WE CAN SHARE YOU.

*Issue 202--Todd



SHARE?

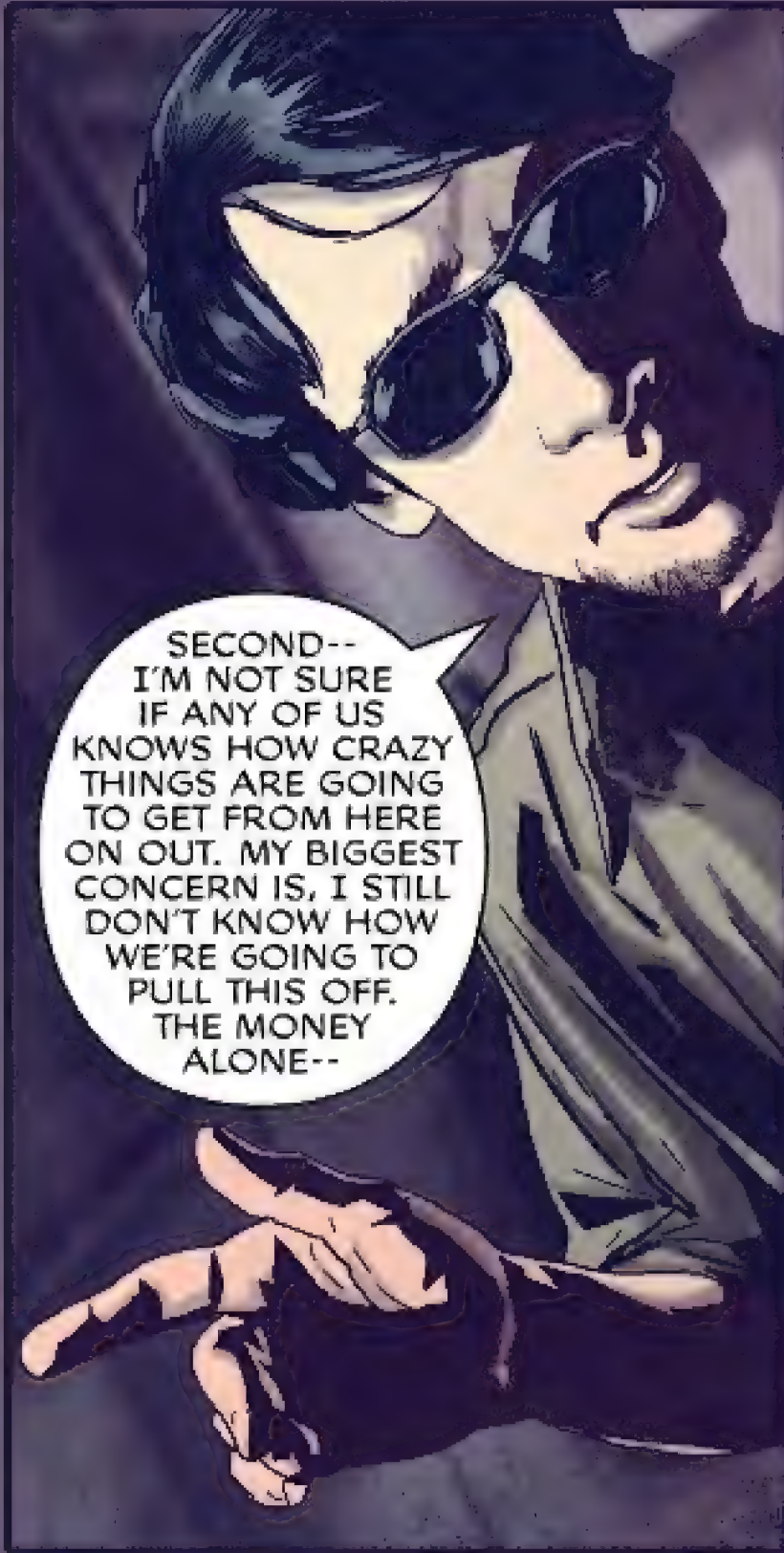
LOOK, SUSAN, I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON IN YOUR HEAD, BUT YOU AND I ARE OVER. WHAT WE--



JIM? OH MY GOD, MAN-- THAT WAS-- YOU NAILED IT!

WHERE'D YOU RUN OFF TO?

FIRST-- I DIDN'T RUN OFF. I'M ALREADY GETTING PRESS HITS FOR INTERVIEWS AND EXCLUSIVES. THAT'S WHAT THAT CALL WAS. I STEPPED OUT BEFORE MY PHONE STARTED BLOWING UP.



SECOND-- I'M NOT SURE IF ANY OF US KNOWS HOW CRAZY THINGS ARE GOING TO GET FROM HERE ON OUT. MY BIGGEST CONCERN IS, I STILL DON'T KNOW HOW WE'RE GOING TO PULL THIS OFF. THE MONEY ALONE--



I'VE GOT IT COVERED, MARC.



SO YOU'VE SAID AND I BELIEVE YOU, BUT-- ARE WE GOING TO OPEN UP AN ACCOUNT AND ACCEPT DONATIONS? BECAUSE WITH YOUR ABILITIES, THE CASH WILL COME ROLLING IN, BUT--

I ALREADY
TOLD YOU-- NO
CHARITABLE
DONATIONS-- NOT
UNTIL WE'RE
ESTABLISHED.

ARE YOU TELLING
ME YOU WANT TO DO THIS
WITHOUT CASH? WAKE UP!
BECAUSE IF THAT'S TRUE, THEN
THAT FOUNDATION YOU JUST
ANNOUNCED TO THE WORLD?
IT CAN'T EXIST!

I'VE GOT IT
COVERED.

YEAH-- ALL
RIGHT. THOUGH
AT ANY POINT ARE YOU
PLANNING ON FILLING ME
IN ON JUST HOW THIS
IS GOING TO COME
TOGETHER?

EVENTUALLY,
FOR NOW-- YOU
HANDLE THE
PRESS AND TAKE
YOUR PHONE
CALLS.

I'LL TAKE
CARE OF THE
BUSINESS.

WHAT
THE HELL
DOES THAT
MEAN?

THE VOID.



YOUR FAILURE
TO KILL ME WAS A
MISTAKE.* NOW YOU'RE
SURROUNDED.

*See Issue 206--TODD



HOW DOES
IT FEEL TO BE...
NOWHERE?

TO BE
ISOLATED
FROM
EVERY-
THING?



COWARD!
SHOW
YOURSELF!
OR ARE YOU
AFRAID?





YOU'RE
THE ONE
THAT NEEDS TO
BE AFRAID,
NOT ME.



RIGHT NOW,
YOU AND I ARE
GOING TO HAVE A TALK.
YOU'RE GOING TO TELL
ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW
ABOUT **BLUDD**. HIS
PLANS. HIS MOTIVES.
EVERYTHING!

AND WHEN
YOU'RE DONE--
I'M GOING TO HURT
YOU. REAL BAD.

SO MY
ONLY QUESTION
IS, HOW MUCH DO YOU
WANT TO SUFFER? THE MORE
DETAILS YOU GIVE ME, THE
LESS PAIN. YOU CHOOSE. AND
IN ALL HONESTY, I HOPE TO HELL
YOU GET DEFIANT AND CLAM
UP ON ME-- BECAUSE I'D LIKE
NOTHING MORE THAN TO
TAKE OUT **ALL MY**
FRUSTRATIONS
ON YOU!

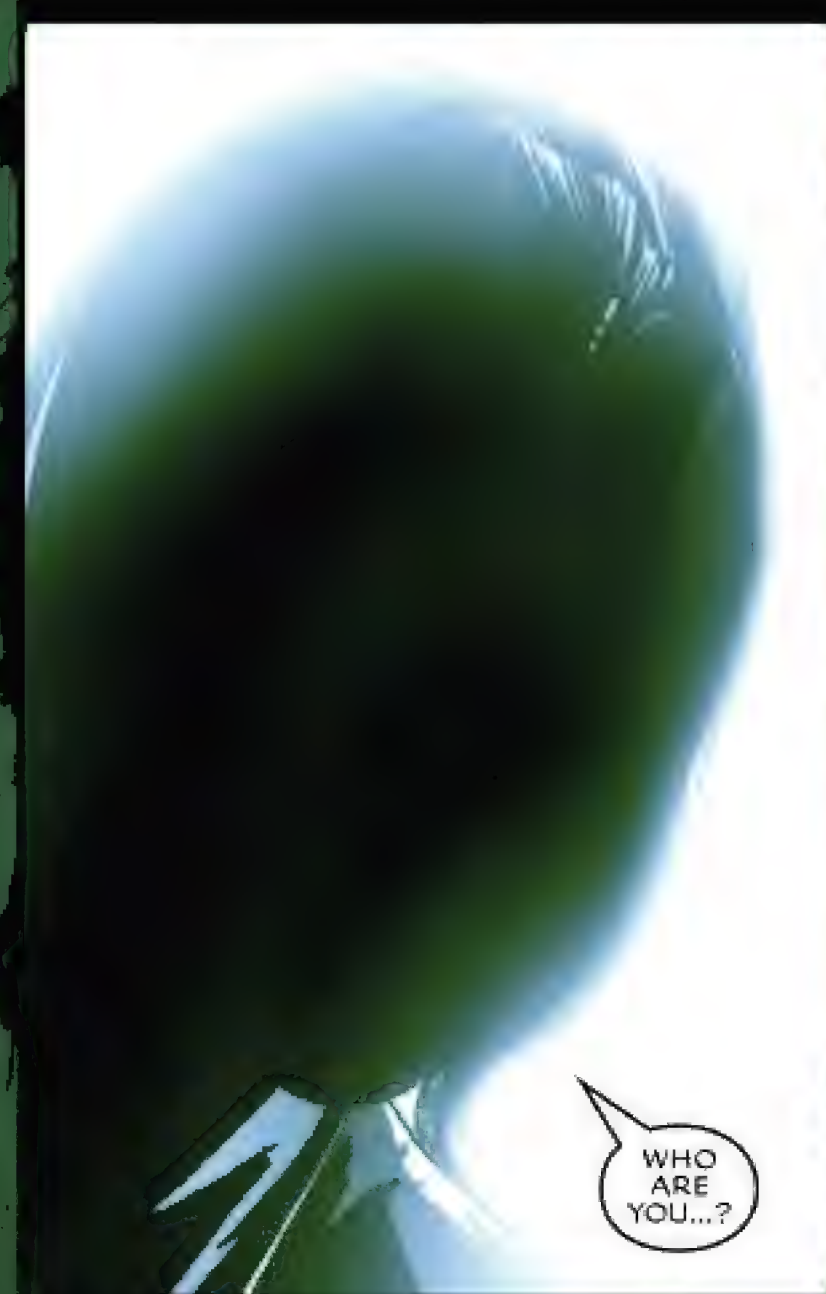
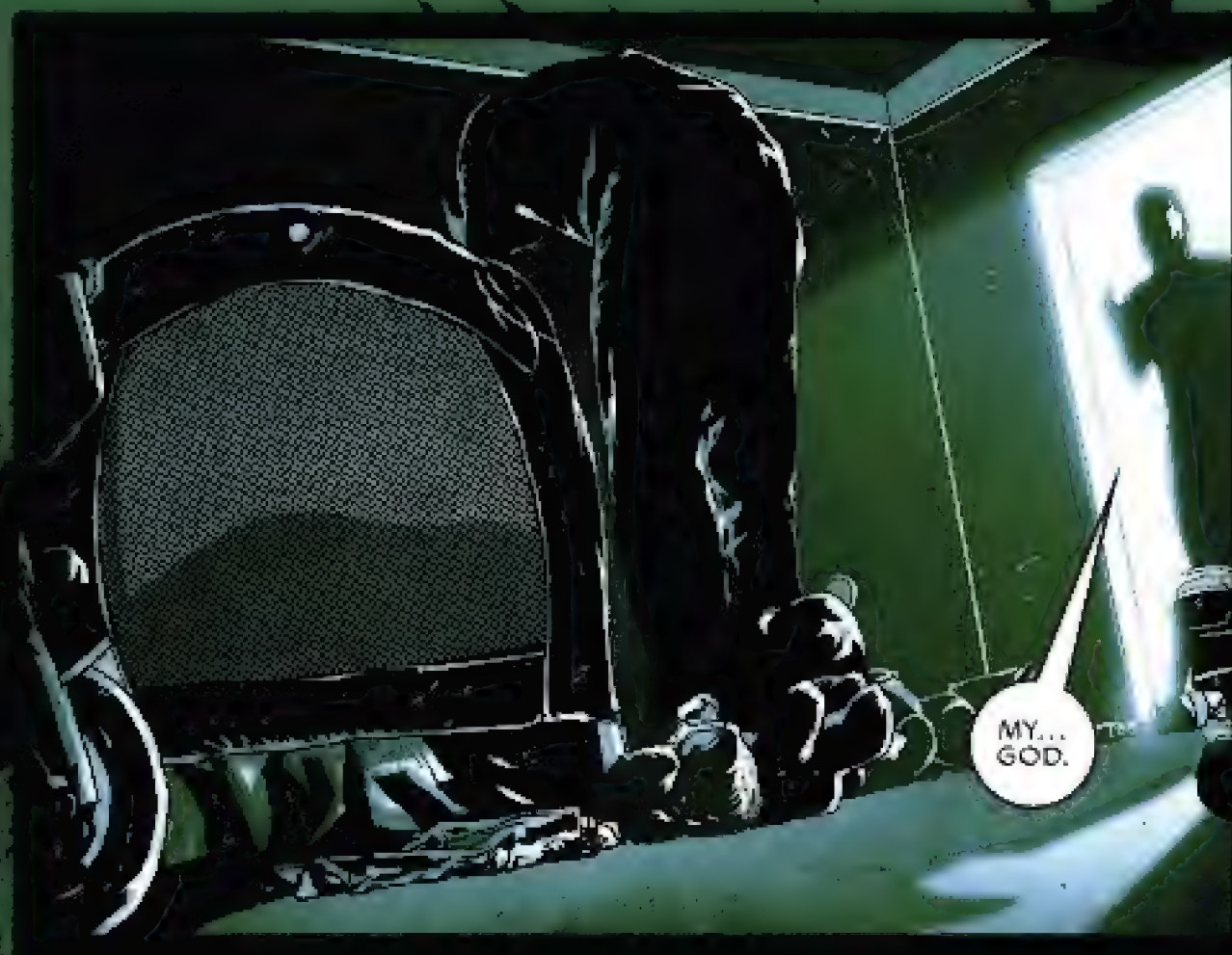


SO...
WHAT'S IT
GOING TO BE,
DEMON?



London, England.





AND WHAT
JOHN NEVER WANTED
TO ACKNOWLEDGE WAS
THAT HIS SUICIDE MAY HAVE
ENDED *HIS* OBLIGATION,
BUT IT DIDN'T PREVENT HIM
FROM PASSING MY HIDDEN
TREASURE ALONG TO
SOMEONE ELSE.

ISN'T
THAT RIGHT,
LITTLE
JENNIE?

next issue: **The BETRAYAL**



image

214

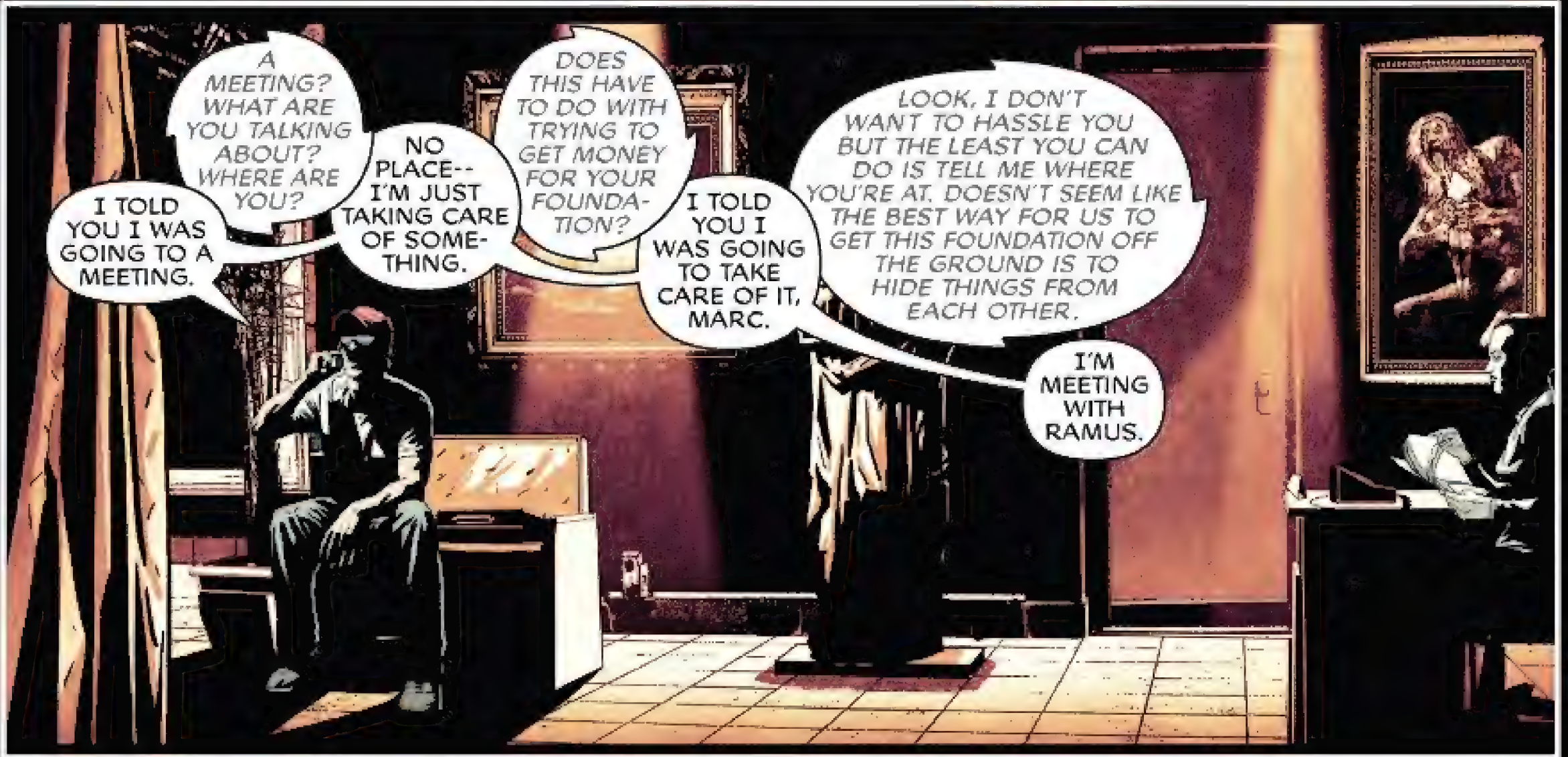
DIGITAL
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SPAWN





FINALLY!
WHERE'VE YOU
BEEN, JIM? I'VE BEEN
TRYING TO REACH
YOU FOR TWO
HOURS!



A MEETING?
WHAT ARE
YOU TALKING
ABOUT?
WHERE ARE
YOU?

I TOLD
YOU I WAS
GOING TO A
MEETING.

NO
PLACE--
I'M JUST
TAKING CARE
OF SOME-
THING.

DOES
THIS HAVE
TO DO WITH
TRYING TO
GET MONEY
FOR YOUR
FOUNDA-
TION?

I TOLD
YOU I
WAS GOING
TO TAKE
CARE OF IT,
MARC.

LOOK, I DON'T
WANT TO HASSLE YOU
BUT THE LEAST YOU CAN
DO IS TELL ME WHERE
YOU'RE AT. DOESN'T SEEM LIKE
THE BEST WAY FOR US TO
GET THIS FOUNDATION OFF
THE GROUND IS TO
HIDE THINGS FROM
EACH OTHER.

I'M
MEETING
WITH
RAMUS.



WHAT?!

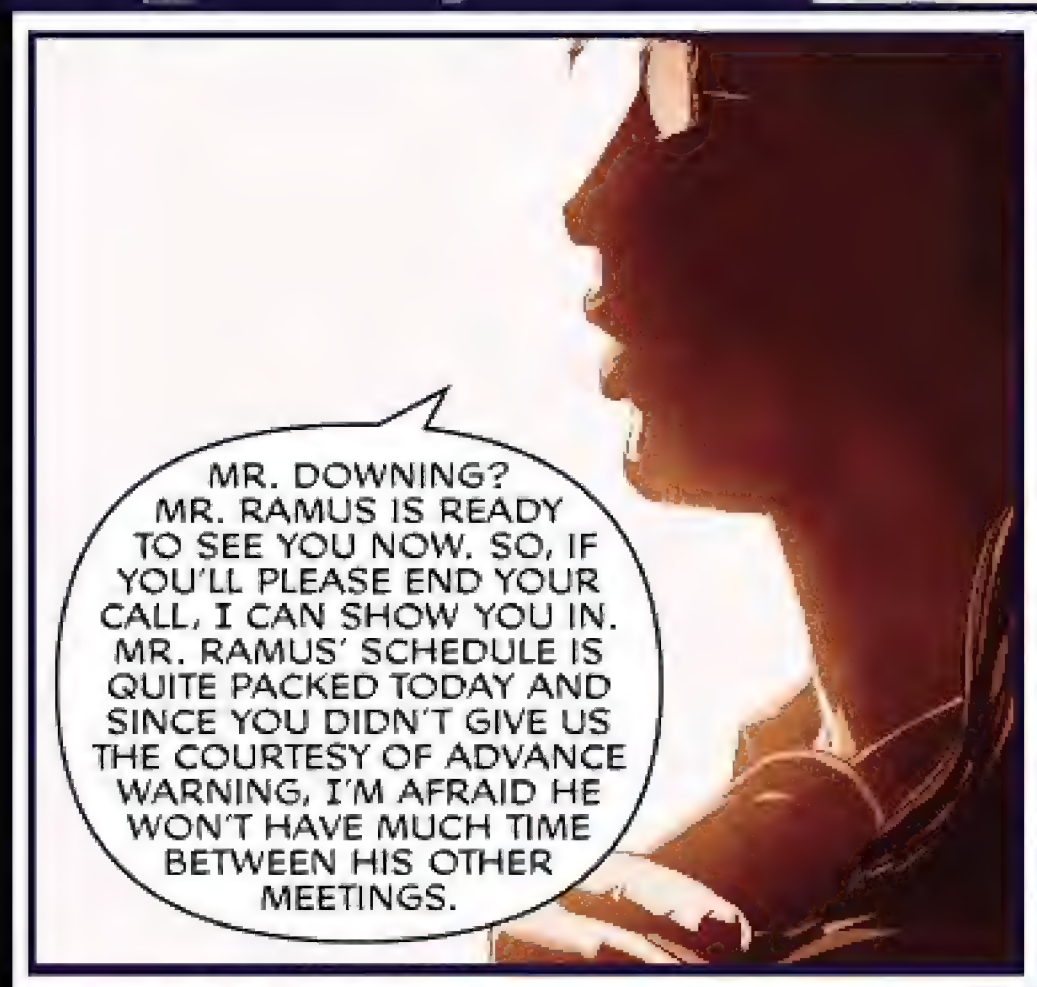
WHY THE HELL
ARE YOU BACK THERE?
LAST TIME WE WENT YOU
STORMED OUT OF HIS OFFICE
LIKE HE'D INSULTED YOUR
MOM OR SOMETHING.* WHAT
MAKES YOU THINK HE'LL SEE
YOU AGAIN... OR EVEN GIVE
YOU A NICKEL AFTER YOU
TOLD HIM TO *SHOVE* HIS
LAST OFFER?

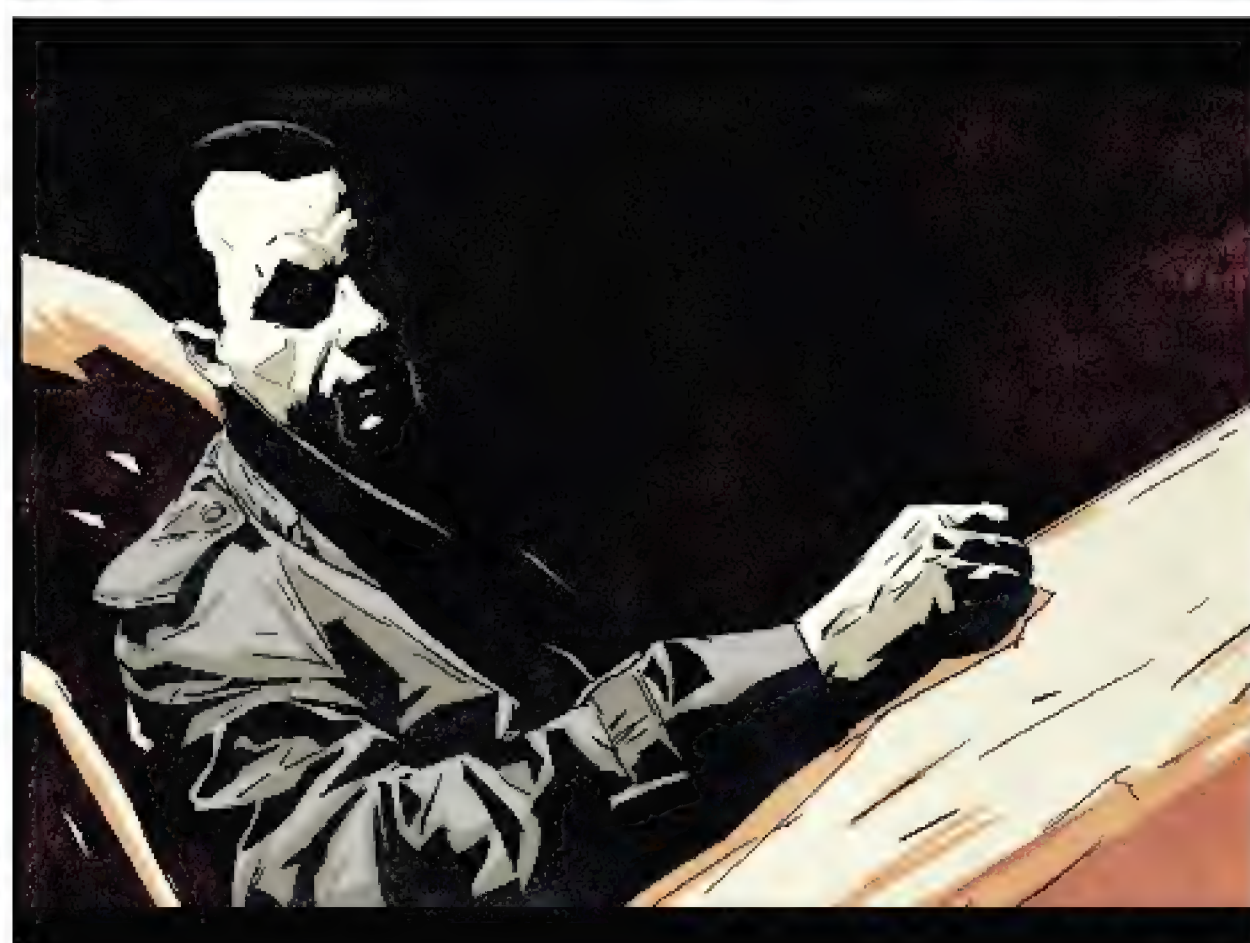
*Issue 202--Todd



IF YOU'D TAKEN HIS
SPONSORSHIP MONEY,
YOU'D ALREADY HAVE ALL THE
CAPITAL YOU'D NEED.

BUT THEN I'D BE
BEHOLDEN TO HIM AND
HIS CORPORATION. I DON'T
NEED THAT. I JUST WANT
HIS CASH-- NO STRINGS
ATTACHED.







I'M NOT HERE TO
NEGOTIATE! AND I'M NOT
GIVING YOU A **DAMN** THING! QUITE
THE CONTRARY. INSTEAD, YOU'RE GOING
TO FULLY FUND THIS FOUNDATION AND IN
RETURN OUR RELATIONSHIP REMAINS
EXACTLY THE WAY IT IS RIGHT NOW.
THAT'S IT. THAT'S THE DEAL!



YOU DON'T GET
TO SAY ANYTHING OTHER
THAN "YES, MR. DOWNING."
ABSOLUTELY, MR. DOWNING."
BECAUSE I ALREADY KNOW THAT
YOU NEED ME. SO YOU WANT TO
F*CK WITH ME-- OR MY COSTUME
OR MY POWERS? **THEN GO
AHEAD!** KNOCK YOURSELF
OUT! BUT IT'S GOING TO
COST YOU.



AND EVERY
TIME I THINK YOU'VE
SENT ONE OF YOUR
GOONS TO TEST ME,
IT'S GOING TO COST
YOU MORE.



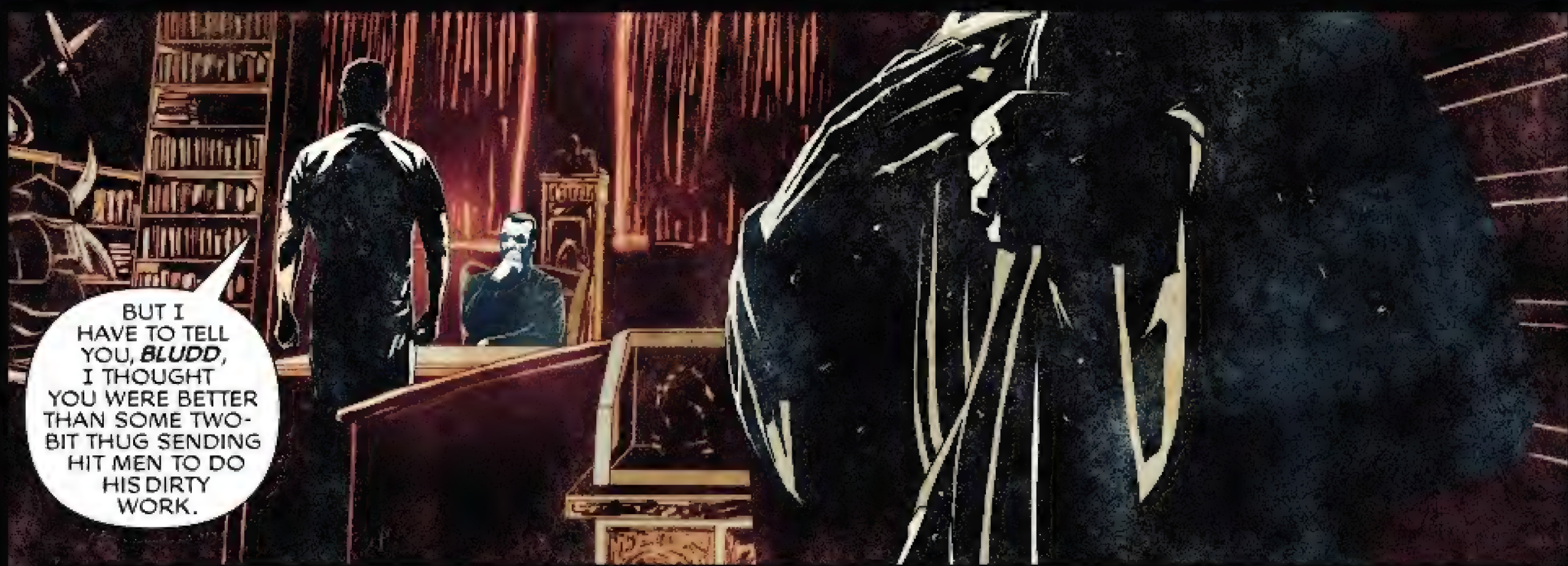
AND IF
ANYONE -- NOT THAT I
GIVE A CRAP-- FROM THE MEDIA
ASKS WHY YOU'RE DOING THIS
I'M SURE YOU'RE CLEVER ENOUGH TO
TELL THEM SOMETHING THAT'LL MAKE
YOU AND YOUR CORPORATIONS
LOOK LIKE PHILANTHROPIC
SAINTS.

SO I'M
SUPPOSED
TO...



SHUT UP!

I SAID YOU DON'T GET TO TALK! YOU NEED SPAWN FOR WHATEVER TWISTED REASONS YOU'VE DELUDED YOURSELF WITH, THAT'S FINE! BUT I'LL BE DAMNED IF YOU'RE GOING TO CALL ALL THE SHOTS! SO THE ONLY WAY YOU KEEP ME ON YOUR SIDE IS WITH YOUR CASH.



BUT I HAVE TO TELL YOU, **BLUDD**, I THOUGHT YOU WERE BETTER THAN SOME TWO-BIT THUG SENDING HIT MEN TO DO HIS DIRTY WORK.



WHAT ARE YOU DOING? THREATENING ME? TRYING TO SCARE ME?

WELL, YOU DON'T.



THAT'S BECAUSE YOU DON'T KNOW ME WELL ENOUGH YET. YOU WILL, IN TIME.

SO, I'LL PLAY THIS GAME ANY WAY YOU WANT. WE CAN JUST KEEP IT TO OURSELVES OR WE CAN DRAG ALL OUR SINS OUT INTO THE LIGHT FOR EVERYONE TO SEE.



AND I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU VAMPIRES LIKE BEING IN THE LIGHT.

BESIDES, I'M SURE YOU'VE ALREADY HEARD THAT I PAID A LITTLE VISIT TO ONE OF YOUR SMALL SHELL COMPANIES OVER IN JERSEY LAST NIGHT. THOUGHT I'D TEST MY WHOLE "THEY HATE LIGHT" THEORY.

Fifteen hours ago.





DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM



DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM



DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM



DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM



DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM D



DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOO



Now.



ONE
OF THEM
GOT OUT
ALIVE.



I
KNOW.

I NEEDED
SOMEONE TO
CRAWL BACK
AND GIVE YOU
THE NEWS.

AND SINCE IT
WAS NEARLY DAWN WHEN
I ATTACKED, I'M THINKING
YOUR BOY WASN'T ABLE TO GET
BACK HERE AS FAST AS HE WOULD
HAVE AT NIGHT. WHICH MEANS YOU'RE
PROBABLY SITTING THERE MAD AS
HELL, BECAUSE YOU JUST FOUND OUT
ABOUT IT. AND *WORSE THAN THAT*,
I'M BETTING A FEW OF THOSE
DOUCHEBAGS WERE RELATED
TO YOU. RIGHT?



OH... C'MON,
DON'T GO ALL
SILENT ON ME--
AND LOSE THE FIVE
MILE STARE. YOU'RE
BECOMING A
CLICHÉ.



WHAT
DO YOU
WANT?

I
ALREADY
TOLD YOU.
I WANT
YOUR
CASH.

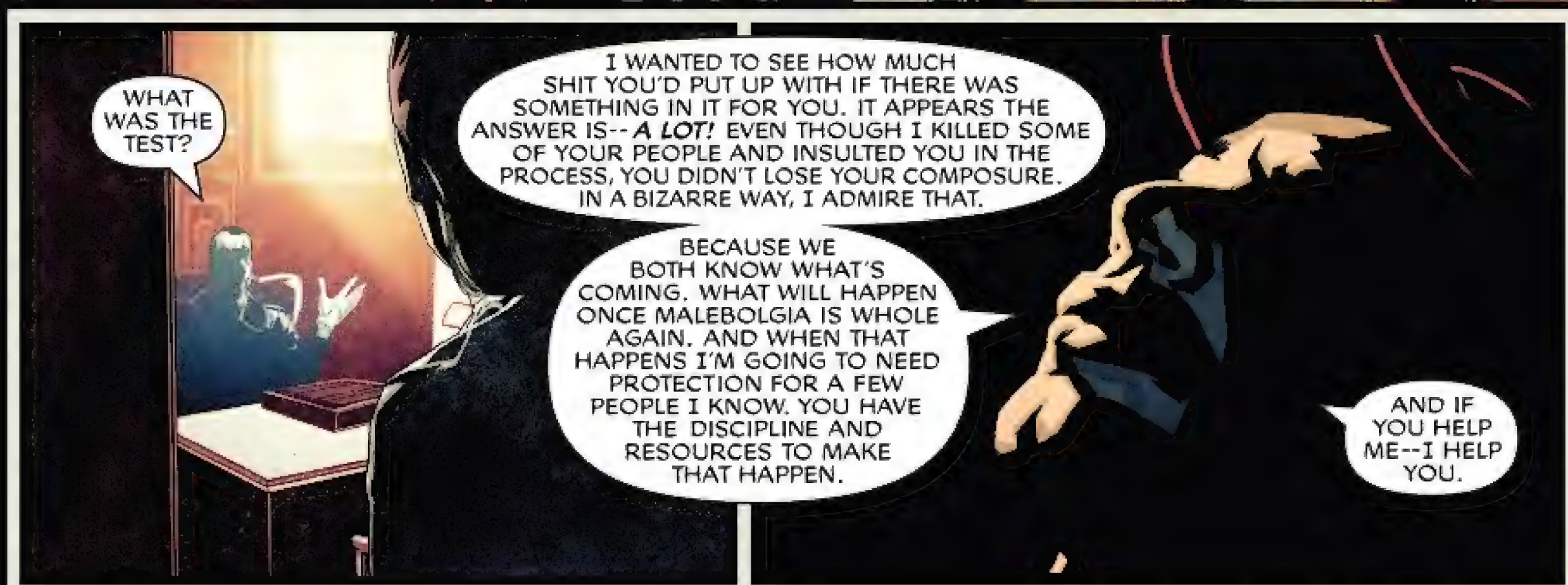


YOU COULD HAVE PHONED ME FOR THAT. WHY COME HERE PERSONALLY?

BECAUSE IT WAS MY TURN TO TEST YOU.

AND DID I PASS?

YES.



WHAT WAS THE TEST?

I WANTED TO SEE HOW MUCH SHIT YOU'D PUT UP WITH IF THERE WAS SOMETHING IN IT FOR YOU. IT APPEARS THE ANSWER IS-- A LOT! EVEN THOUGH I KILLED SOME OF YOUR PEOPLE AND INSULTED YOU IN THE PROCESS, YOU DIDN'T LOSE YOUR COMPOSURE. IN A BIZARRE WAY, I ADMIRE THAT.

BECAUSE WE BOTH KNOW WHAT'S COMING. WHAT WILL HAPPEN ONCE MALEBOLGIA IS WHOLE AGAIN. AND WHEN THAT HAPPENS I'M GOING TO NEED PROTECTION FOR A FEW PEOPLE I KNOW. YOU HAVE THE DISCIPLINE AND RESOURCES TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN.

AND IF YOU HELP ME--I HELP YOU.



THAT DAY IS DRAWING NEAR. WILL YOU BE READY?

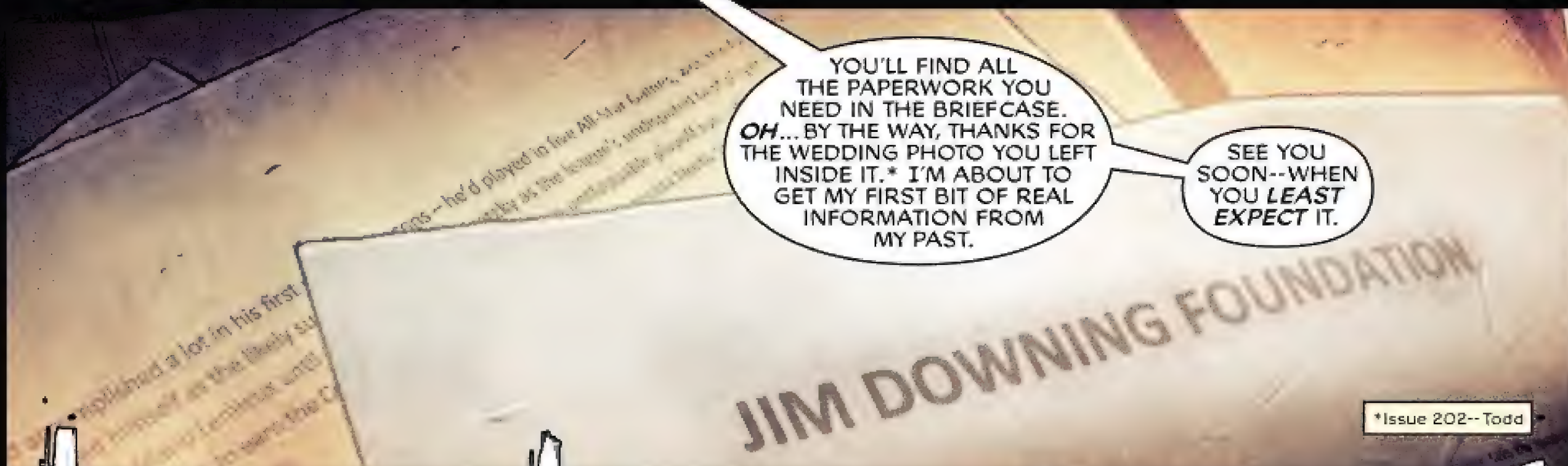


YOU'LL BE A LINCHPIN IN THAT BATTLE, I BELIEVE

THAT'S WHAT EVERYONE KEEPS SAYING. SO, WHEN THE TIME COMES, IF YOU DO YOUR PART, I'LL DO MINE.



IN THE MEANTIME, I'D LIKE TO BRING SOME HOPE TO THE WORLD. YOU GET TO BE A PART OF THAT.



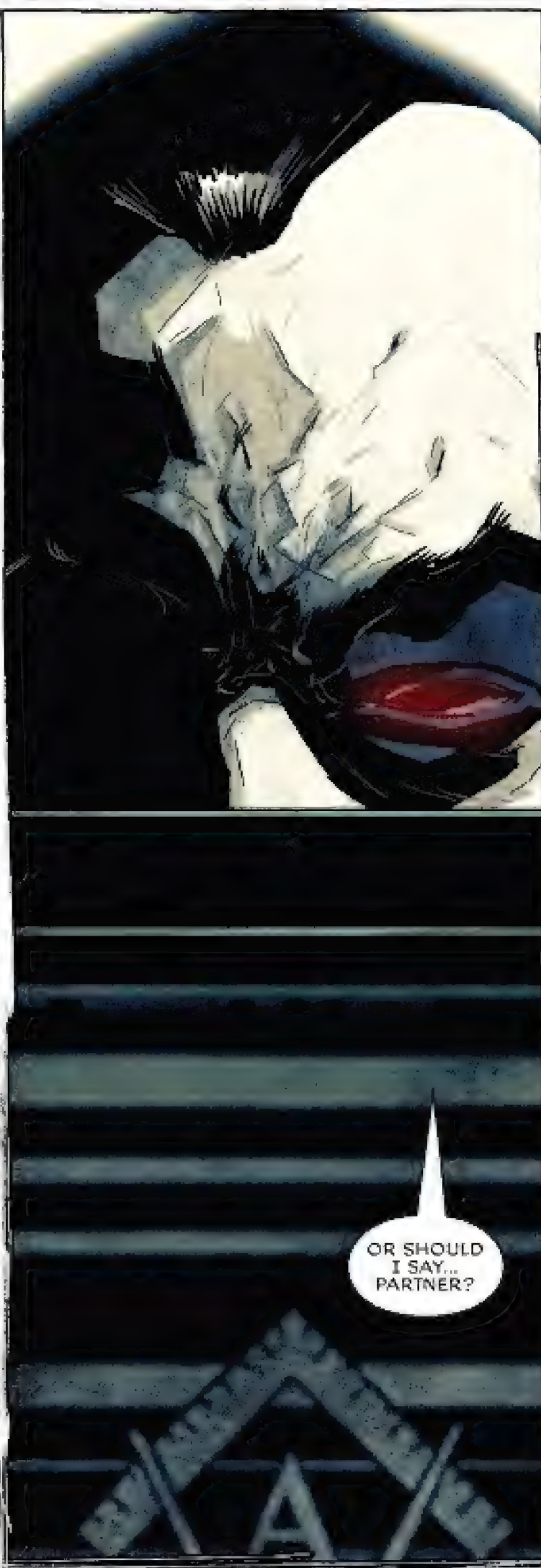
YOU'LL FIND ALL THE PAPERWORK YOU NEED IN THE BRIEFCASE. OH... BY THE WAY, THANKS FOR THE WEDDING PHOTO YOU LEFT INSIDE IT. * I'M ABOUT TO GET MY FIRST BIT OF REAL INFORMATION FROM MY PAST.

SEE YOU SOON--WHEN YOU **LEAST** EXPECT IT.

*Issue 202-- Todd



I LOOK FORWARD TO IT MR. DOWNING.



OR SHOULD I SAY... PARTNER?



deeDEET
diDEET

HEY, JIM.
HOW'D YOUR
MEETING GO?
WAS HE
INTERESTED?



BETTER
THAN THAT. HE
AGREED TO GIVE
US ENOUGH CASH
FLOW FOR OUR
FIRST YEAR.



**NO
WAY!!**

JESUS, MAN,
WHAT'D YOU TELL
HIM? I MEAN-- A FULL
YEAR! THAT'S UNHEARD
OF! NOBODY DOES
THAT UNLESS THEY'RE
BILL GATES.







YOU JUST BOUGHT YOURSELF SOME TIME. THAT'S GOOD.

WHO ARE YOU? AND WHAT'S ALL THIS BULLSHIT ABOUT?! I WAS SUPPOSED TO MEET A FRIEND OUT THERE.

YOUR FRIEND'S NOT COMING. THEY ALREADY GOT TO HIM. SO, DO YOURSELF A FAVOR AND LISTEN TO WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SAY.

I WORK FOR THE GOVERNMENT, VERY HIGH-LEVEL STUFF, AND THE OTHER DAY OUR COMPUTERS THREW UP A RED FLAG. YOU SEE, A FEW PEOPLE PUNCHED IN A SEARCH FOR SOMEONE THAT OUR SIDE WOULD RATHER NOT HAVE POPPING UP -- THE PROBLEM IS WITHIN OUR OWN RANK AND FILE THERE ARE FACTIONS, EACH WITH THEIR OWN AGENDA AND SEPARATE SECURITY CLEARANCES. WHICH MEANS THAT, FROM TIME TO TIME, MY WORST ENEMIES ARE INSIDE THE GROUP I WORK FOR.

THINK ABOUT IT LIKE TEN REPORTERS, LIKE YOURSELF, ALL FIGHTING FOR THE ONE HEADLINE THAT'LL MAKE THEIR CAREER. THEY'D ALL DO ANYTHING TO GET THERE FIRST. THAT'S HOW MY BUSINESS WORKS TOO. SO I NEEDED TO GET TO YOU AHEAD OF THEM.

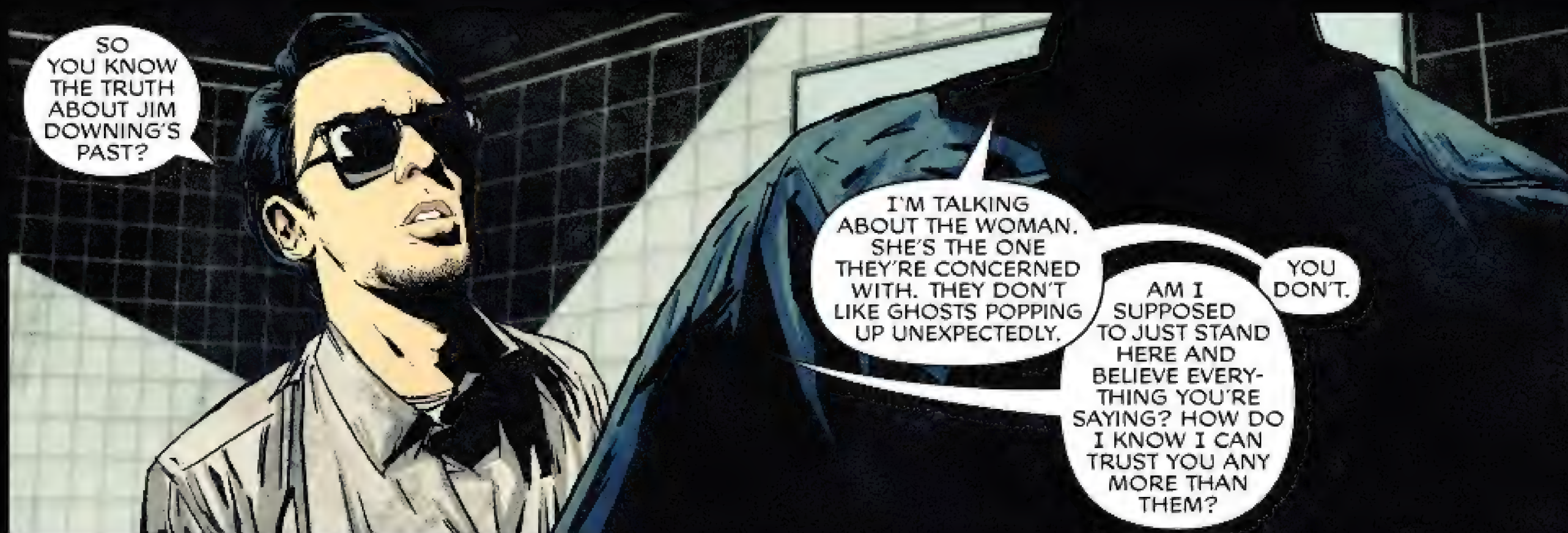
THAT'S WHY I PLANTED THAT PHONE IN YOUR POCKET.

HOW'D YOU DO THAT?

WE'VE BEEN TRAINED.

NOW I NEED IT BACK.

AND YOU KNOW WHAT STARTED ALL THIS? YOU SENT A PICTURE TO PEOPLE. A PICTURE THAT SHOULDN'T EXIST.



SO YOU KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT JIM DOWNING'S PAST?

I'M TALKING ABOUT THE WOMAN. SHE'S THE ONE THEY'RE CONCERNED WITH. THEY DON'T LIKE GHOSTS POPPING UP UNEXPECTEDLY.

AM I SUPPOSED TO JUST STAND HERE AND BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU'RE SAYING? HOW DO I KNOW I CAN TRUST YOU ANY MORE THAN THEM?

YOU DON'T.



I DIDN'T SAY "MIGHT."

AND YOU'RE SAYING THEY MIGHT KILL ME BECAUSE OF ALL THIS?



NO!

THIS IS CRAZY! ALL OF IT! I... I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING. I'M JUST TRYING TO HELP OUT A FRIEND.

SO GO **SCREW YOURSELF!** I DON'T NEED ANY OF THIS! I'VE GOT MY OWN CONTACTS.

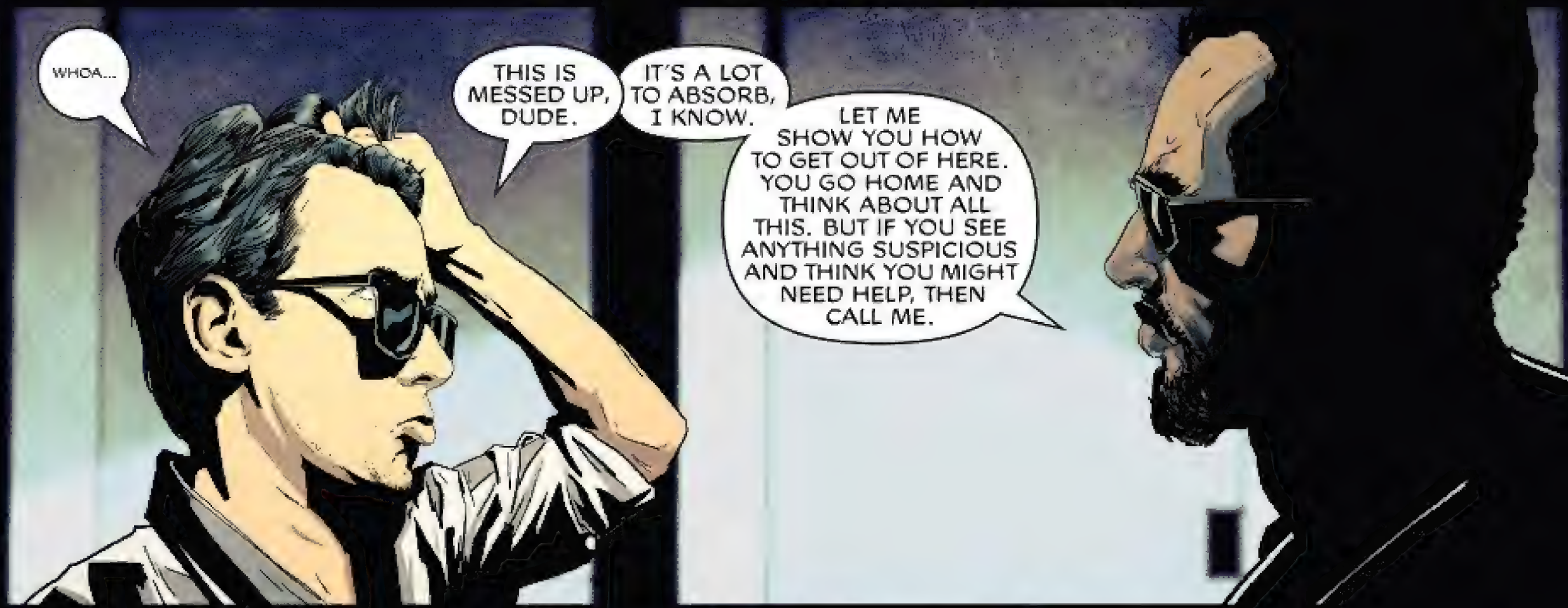


YOU DON'T GET TO WALK AWAY THAT EASY.

GET YOUR HAND OFF ME!



YOU SENT OUT THE PHOTO. YOU CAN'T TAKE THAT BACK. THEY WILL NOW HUNT YOU AND WATCH YOU UNTIL THEY THINK NO ONE'S LOOKING. LUCKY FOR YOU, YOU'VE BEEN GETTING LOTS OF MEDIA ATTENTION, SO THEY WILL BE MORE DISCRETE THAN THEIR NORM.



WHOA...

THIS IS
MESSED UP,
DUDE.

IT'S A LOT
TO ABSORB,
I KNOW.

LET ME
SHOW YOU HOW
TO GET OUT OF HERE.
YOU GO HOME AND
THINK ABOUT ALL
THIS. BUT IF YOU SEE
ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS
AND THINK YOU MIGHT
NEED HELP, THEN
CALL ME.

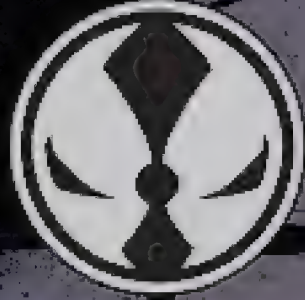
AND
WHATEVER
YOU DO, DON'T
CALL THE
POLICE...

THEY'RE
IN ON IT,
TOO.

**TMP LIMITED HOLDINGS
LLC**

TERENCE FITZGERALD
DIRECTOR OF ACQUISITIONS
AND LIQUIDATIONS

555-627-1996
tfitzgerald@tmp.com



Next: **SECRETS UNVEILED**

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1992-2012

image

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THANKS FOR STAYING WITH US THROUGH THE BREAK--

--AND NOW, AS PROMISED, OUR MUCH ANTICIPATED GUEST, IN HIS FIRST APPEARANCE SINCE HE ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF HIS NEW FOUNDATION. ITS MISSION IS TO HELP PEOPLE WITH DISEASES CONSIDERED INCURABLE. MORE ON THAT LATER IN THE INTERVIEW.

FOR NOW, LET ME INTRODUCE JIM DOWNING. I'M SURE YOU'VE ALL BEEN READING ABOUT HIM IN THE PAST COUPLE OF WEEKS. WELCOME TO THE SHOW, JIM.

GLAD TO BE HERE.

RUNDOWN
MOTEL.
MIDDLE
AMERICA.

OKAY, LET ME START BY ASKING, WHAT'S YOUR REACTION TO EVERYTHING THAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN YOUR LIFE RECENTLY? I MEAN, TV CAMERAS CAUGHT YOU LIVE AS YOU HEALED THAT PHOTOGRAPHER, AND NOW YOU'RE A HUGE INTERNATIONAL SENSATION. ALL THIS ATTENTION... HOW'RE YOU DEALING WITH IT?

IN ALL HONESTY, CRAIG, I DON'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE IN THE MATTER. ONCE THAT VID OF ME GIVING HELP TO THAT INJURED MAN WENT VIRAL... WELL, IT'S GOTTEN SOMEWHAT HECTIC.

TO BE CLEAR, YOU DID MORE THAN JUST 'HELP' THAT MAN. WHAT WE SAW ON TV WAS CONFIRMED BY EYE WITNESSES. THAT MAN WAS CRITICALLY INJURED AFTER BEING HIT BY A CITY BUS. ALL REPORTS MENTIONED MASSIVE BLEEDING-- AND YOUR COMPANION, WHO HAPPENS TO BE A NURSE, WAS YELLING THAT HE WAS ABOUT TO DIE. THAT'S QUITE A SITUATION...

...AND DOCTORS CONTINUE TO BE MYSTIFIED BY THE POWERS YOU KEEP EXHIBITING. IN FACT, THE MYSTERIES SURROUNDING YOU CONTINUE TO GROW.

EVERY PERSON WHO'S MADE SOME KIND OF PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH YOU AND WHO WAS, AT THE TIME, STRICKEN WITH A DISEASE OR PHYSICAL ALIMENT, HAS BEEN CURED. DOCTORS HAVE CONFIRMED THEIR NEW FOUND HEALTH. SO, THESE EVENTS, WHICH BEGAN AS RUMORS, HAVE PROVEN TO BE TRUE.

ALL OF THIS BECOMES EVEN MORE COMPELLING DUE TO YOUR LACK OF ANY RECOLLECTION OF YOUR PAST-- AND THE FACT THAT, AS OF TODAY, NO ONE HAS STEPPED FORWARD CLAIMING TO HAVE KNOWN YOU. NO ONE AT ALL.

CAN YOU TALK ABOUT WHY YOU THINK THAT IS?

SO FAR, NONE OF MY DOCTORS OR ANY OF THE STAFF FROM THE HOSPITAL REMEMBERS HOW I GOT THERE...

AND YOU WERE THERE IN A COMA, FOR YEARS, UNTIL VERY RECENTLY.

THAT'S RIGHT.

BUT MY FILES WERE EITHER LOST OR DESTROYED WHEN THE BUILDING I WAS IN CAUGHT FIRE. * IT'S FRUSTRATING. THE TRAIL TO MY PAST SEEMS TO JUST LEAD OFF A CLIFF, AND NO ONE HAS GIVEN ME A PROPER SENSE OF HOW THAT COULD'VE HAPPENED. HOPEFULLY, WE'LL GET SOME ANSWERS SOON.

THAT HAS TO BE DIFFICULT, NOT HAVING EVEN A HINT OF YOUR PAST. I'VE READ WHERE YOU SAID THAT JIM DOWNING MIGHT NOT EVEN BE YOUR REAL NAME.

NO ONE KNOWS.

IT WAS THE NAME ON MY BED AND ON THE DOOR TO MY HOSPITAL ROOM. THE AUTHORITIES CONDUCTED A NAME SEARCH BUT HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO FIND ANYTHING YET. I KEEP ASKING THE SAME QUESTIONS I'M SURE YOUR VIEWERS ARE ASKING: "HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?" SURELY, SOMEONE HAS INFORMATION-- AND WHAT ABOUT FAMILY OR FRIENDS? SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE, HAS TO RECOGNIZE ME.

*Issue 187-- Todd

VATICAN CITY.

I BELIEVE YOU'VE READ THE REPORT. IT CONTAINS WRITE-UPS ON NEARLY EVERYONE DOWNING HAS COME IN CONTACT WITH, BUT THESE THREE ARE THE ONLY ONES HE SEEMS TO HAVE ANY PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH. ONE WAS HIS BEDSIDE NURSE FOR YEARS. THE OTHER TWO ARE A COUPLE HE IS CURRENTLY LIVING WITH, THOUGH HE HASN'T BEEN BACK TO THEIR APARTMENT FOR A FEW DAYS.

THE MALE IS A REPORTER, AND NOW APPEARS TO BE WORKING FOR HIM IN SOME TYPE OF MANAGERIAL CAPACITY...



NO.
THAT'S
NOT
ME.

OUR STATION DID ITS OWN RESEARCH AFTER YOU AGREED TO THIS INTERVIEW. SADLY, WE RAN INTO THE SAME DEAD ENDS AS YOU AND THE POLICE. SO, WITH THE ASSUMPTION YOU APPEARED OUT OF NOWHERE AND IMMEDIATELY STARTED PERFORMING MIRACLES, WHAT'S YOUR REACTION TO THE LARGE GROUP OF PEOPLE AROUND THE GLOBE WHO THINK YOU'RE THE SECOND COMING?...

...AND THE REASON NO ONE CAN FIND ANY BACKGROUND ON YOU IS BECAUSE YOU MAY BE JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF...?



...WHICH MAKES HIM A MORE DIFFICULT TARGET.

WE AGREE. AND MR. ROSEN'S GIRLFRIEND, SUSAN MATHEWS, SEEMS TO BE ONLY REMOTELY INVOLVED. SHE AND DOWNING... JUST THE TWO OF THEM... HAVE NEVER BEEN SEEN TOGETHER IN PUBLIC.



THEN THE NURSE IS OUR PLAY?

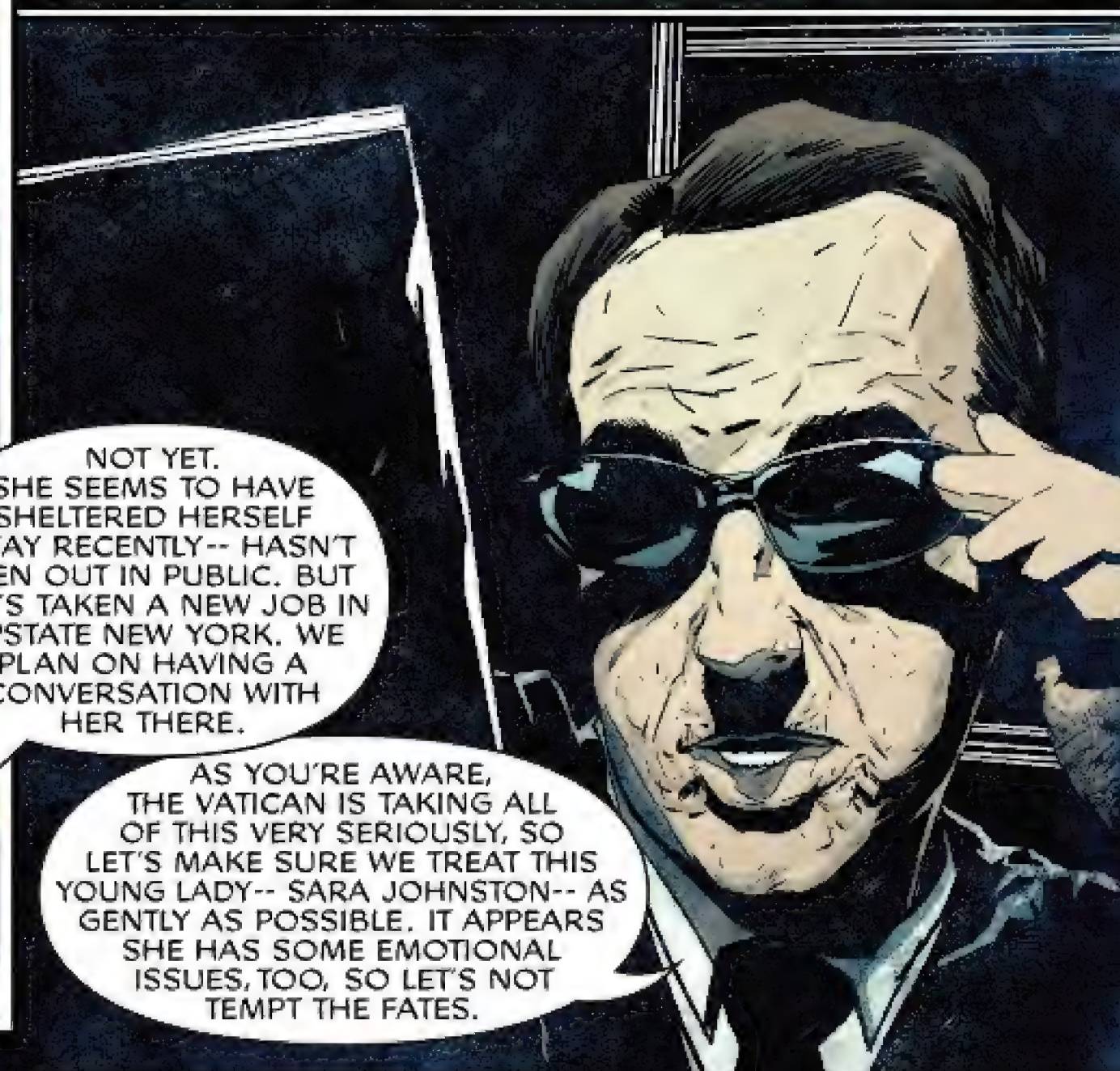
YES. WE'VE HAD SURVEILLANCE ON HER SINCE WE GOT OUR FIRST PHONE CALL ABOUT DOWNING. AND WHAT MAKES HER THE PERFECT ENTRY POINT IS HER COMPLETE DEVOTION TO THE CHURCH. IT COULDN'T HAVE TURNED OUT ANY BETTER.

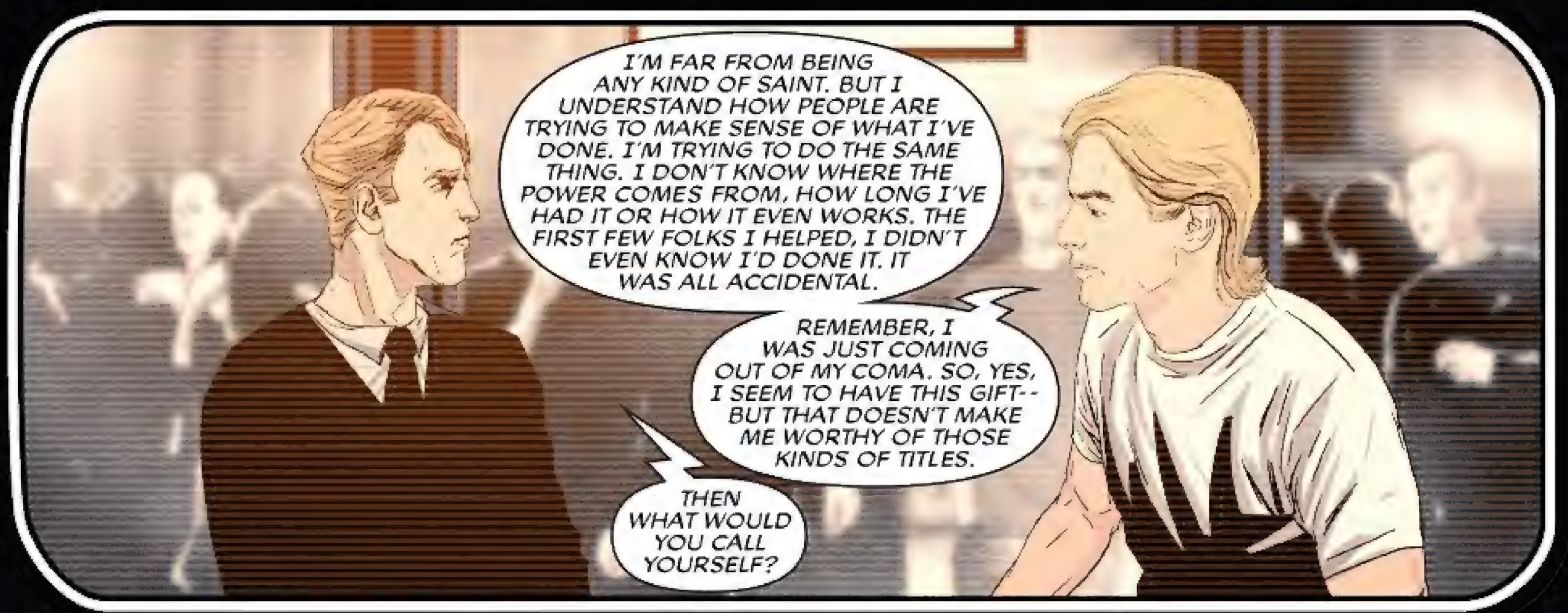
THE POPE WILL BE PLEASED TO KNOW THAT THE PERSON CLOSEST TO MR. DOWNING IS ALSO LOYAL TO THE CATHOLIC TEACHINGS. HAVE WE MADE CONTACT?



NOT YET. SHE SEEMS TO HAVE SHELTERED HERSELF AWAY RECENTLY-- HASN'T BEEN OUT IN PUBLIC. BUT SHE'S TAKEN A NEW JOB IN UPSTATE NEW YORK. WE PLAN ON HAVING A CONVERSATION WITH HER THERE.

AS YOU'RE AWARE, THE VATICAN IS TAKING ALL OF THIS VERY SERIOUSLY. SO LET'S MAKE SURE WE TREAT THIS YOUNG LADY-- SARA JOHNSTON-- AS GENTLY AS POSSIBLE. IT APPEARS SHE HAS SOME EMOTIONAL ISSUES, TOO, SO LET'S NOT TEMPT THE FATES.





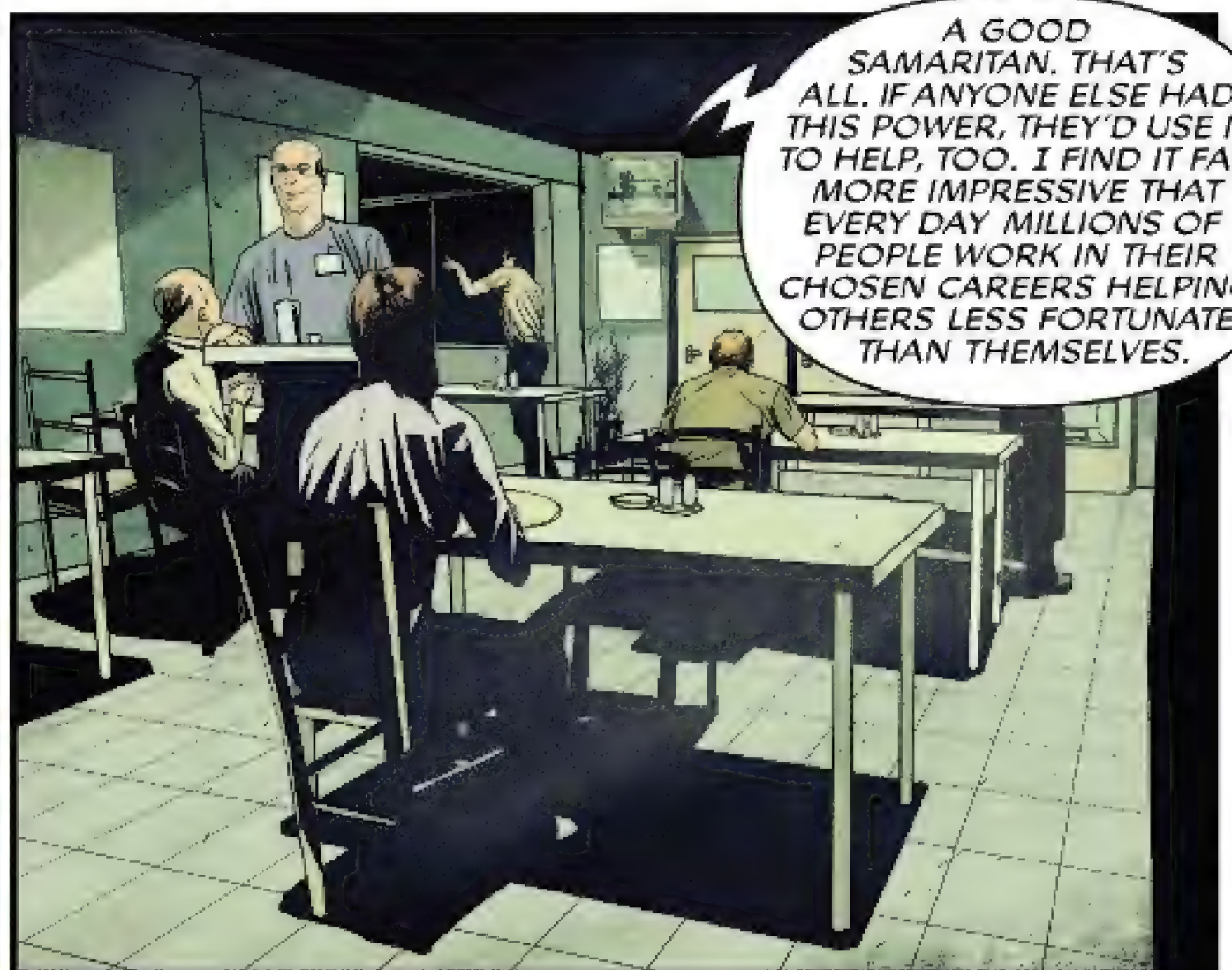
I'M FAR FROM BEING ANY KIND OF SAINT. BUT I UNDERSTAND HOW PEOPLE ARE TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF WHAT I'VE DONE. I'M TRYING TO DO THE SAME THING. I DON'T KNOW WHERE THE POWER COMES FROM, HOW LONG I'VE HAD IT OR HOW IT EVEN WORKS. THE FIRST FEW FOLKS I HELPED, I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW I'D DONE IT. IT WAS ALL ACCIDENTAL.

REMEMBER, I WAS JUST COMING OUT OF MY COMA. SO, YES, I SEEM TO HAVE THIS GIFT-- BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE ME WORTHY OF THOSE KINDS OF TITLES.

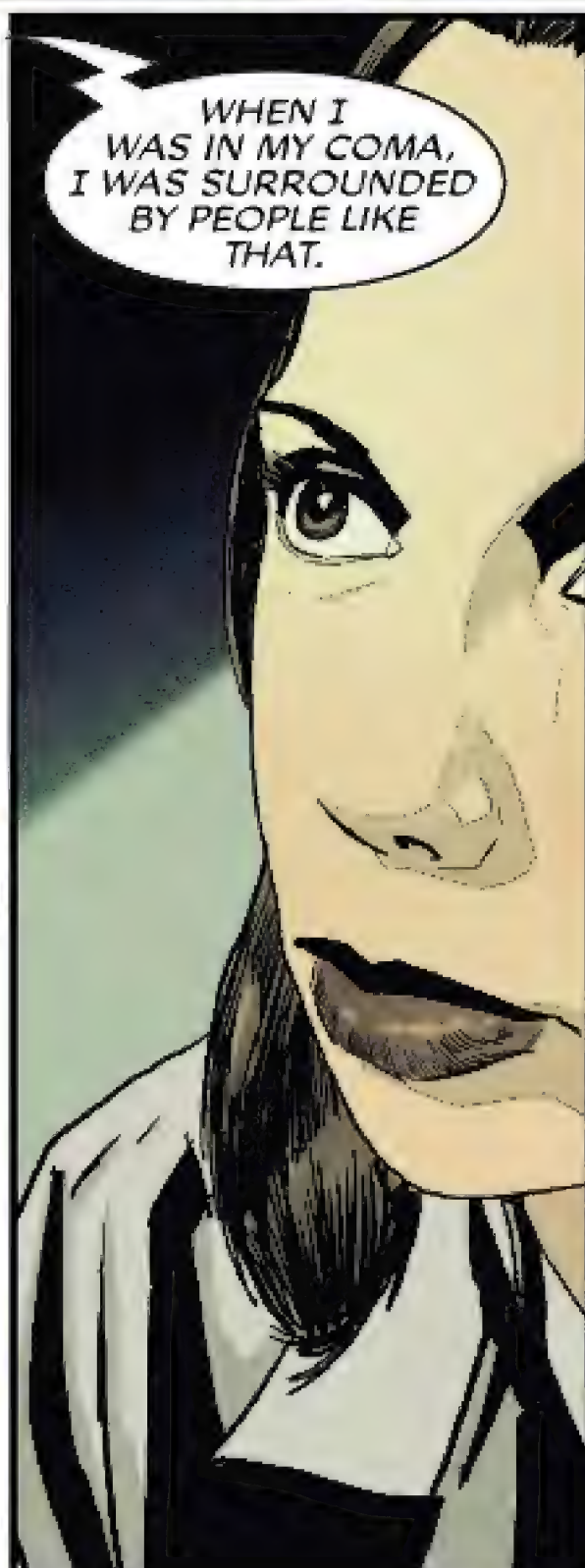
THEN WHAT WOULD YOU CALL YOURSELF?



STATE HOSPITAL.
ALBANY, NEW YORK



A GOOD SAMARITAN. THAT'S ALL. IF ANYONE ELSE HAD THIS POWER, THEY'D USE IT TO HELP, TOO. I FIND IT FAR MORE IMPRESSIVE THAT EVERY DAY MILLIONS OF PEOPLE WORK IN THEIR CHOSEN CAREERS HELPING OTHERS LESS FORTUNATE THAN THEMSELVES.



WHEN I WAS IN MY COMA, I WAS SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE LIKE THAT.



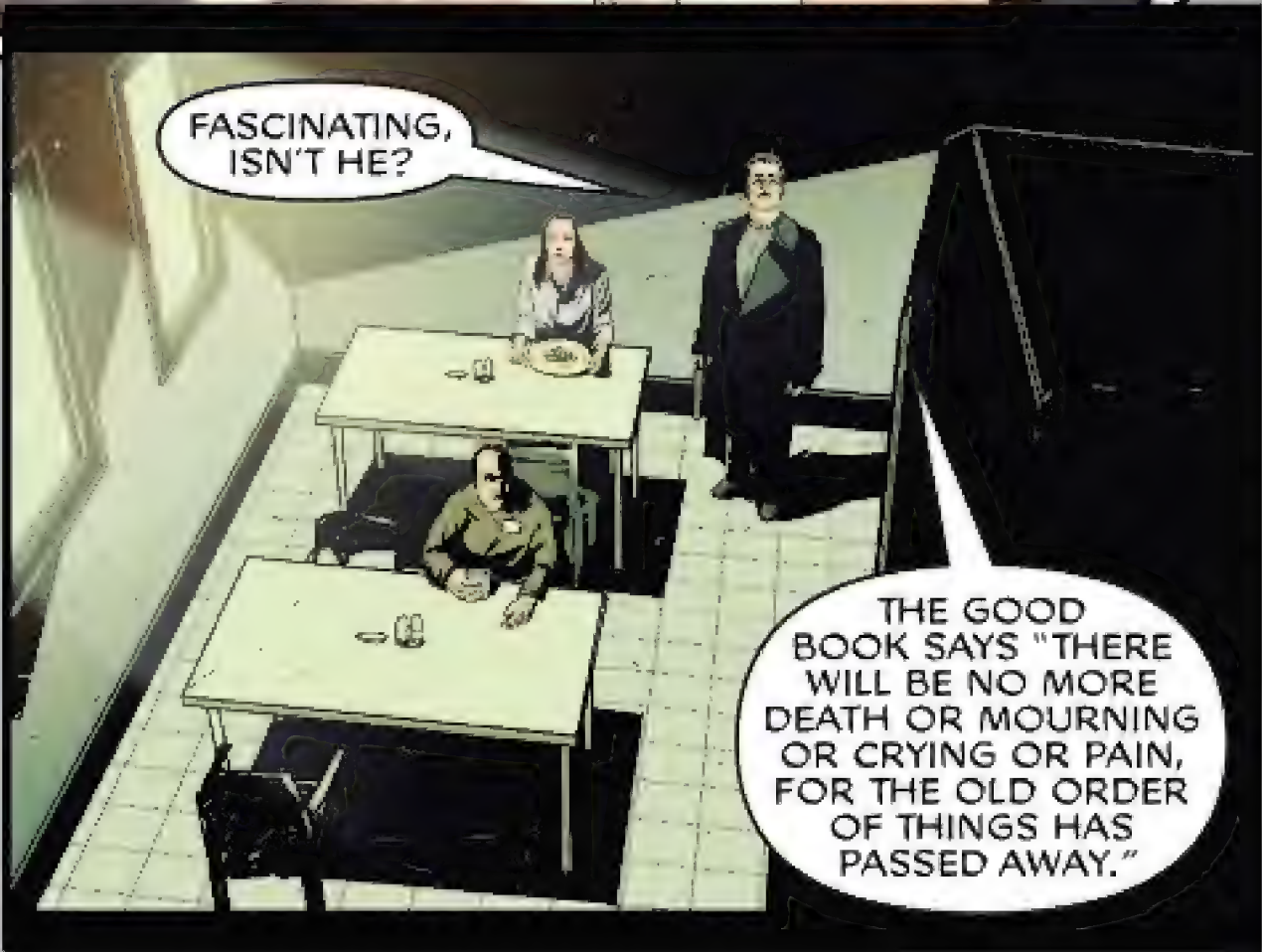


YOU'RE RIGHT-- THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO PUT THEMSELVES IN HARM'S WAY TO PROTECT THIS NATION, AND THE DOCTORS, NURSES, POLICE AND FIRE-FIGHTERS-- ALL DESERVE OUR GRATITUDE.

BUT THAT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT YOU'RE SPECIAL. AND UNTIL YOUR ACTIONS SAY OTHERWISE--I THINK THE WORLD IS GOING TO LOOK AT YOU IN AMAZEMENT. YOU'RE EVEN SETTING SOME FASHION TRENDS.

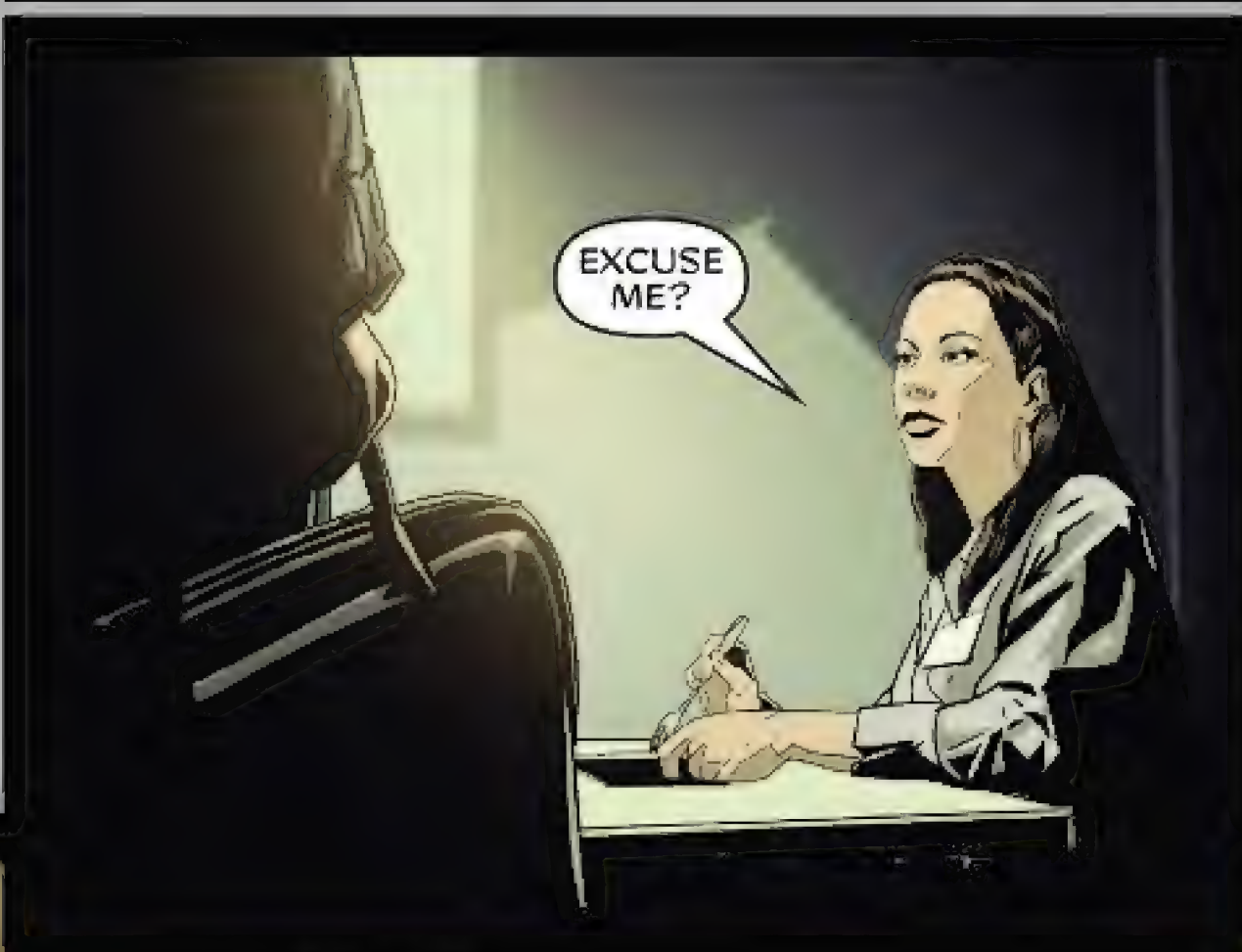


SUNGLASSES-AT-NIGHT HAS GRIPPED THE NATION.



FASCINATING, ISN'T HE?

THE GOOD BOOK SAYS "THERE WILL BE NO MORE DEATH OR MOURNING OR CRYING OR PAIN, FOR THE OLD ORDER OF THINGS HAS PASSED AWAY."



EXCUSE ME?



FORGIVE ME, MS. JOHNSTON, I APOLOGIZE IF I'M INTERRUPTING YOU, BUT I WAS WONDERING IF...

YOU A REPORTER?

OH MY GOODNESS... NO.

THEN WHAT DO YOU WANT?



MY NAME IS FATHER HALLWELL, AND I'VE TRAVELED A LONG WAY TO DELIVER AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM MY SUPERIOR.

AND WHO MIGHT THAT BE?

AS AN ENVOY FOR THE OFFICE OF THE PAPACY I COME WITH DIRECT ORDERS FROM HIS HOLINESS HIMSELF.

THE POPE? YOU WORK FOR THE ACTUAL POPE?

WOW! YOU GUYS WILL STOOP TO ANYTHING TO GET YOUR STORY... WON'T YOU?



AND THE REASON I WEAR THOSE GLASSES IS TO TRY AND BE SOMEWHAT INCONSPICUOUS OUT IN PUBLIC. THAT OTHERS ARE BEGINNING TO DRESS THE SAME WAY, WITH THE SHADES AND HAT, ACTUALLY MAKES IT EASIER FOR ME TO MOVE AROUND.

THE MORE GUYS THAT LOOK LIKE ME THE LESS CHANCE I HAVE OF A BYSTANDER THINKING IT REALLY IS ME.

THAT'S AN INTERESTING TAKE ON YOUR CELEBRITY.



NOW IF YOU DON'T MIND, I NEED TO GET BACK TO WORK.

MA'AM. I ASSURE YOU-- I'M NOT THE PAPARAZZI. I ONLY CAME TO ASK FOR YOUR HELP.



CLEARLY, THOUGH, WE-- I-- HAVE MADE A MISTAKE. AGAIN, I'M SORRY FOR ANY INCONVENIENCE. WE THOUGHT-- PERHAPS BECAUSE OF YOUR STRONG FAITH AND LOVE FOR THE LORD-- YOU COULD BE OF VALUE.



THIS ASSIGNMENT WAS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO HIS HOLINESS. BUT HE INSISTED WE ONLY GET YOUR PARTICIPATION WILLINGLY. HE DIDN'T WANT TO IMPOSE HIMSELF OTHERWISE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

WAIT...

DID THE POPE REALLY SEND YOU?

HE DID.

WHY?

BECAUSE OF YOUR CONNECTION TO MR. DOWNING.



OH!... SO THIS IS ABOUT JIM AGAIN. I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED!



NO. IT'S ABOUT THE BOTH OF YOU. AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL, MR. DOWNING HAS NOT ANNOUNCED HIS ALLEGIANCE TO ANY DENOMINATION. AS ONE OF GOD'S FINEST, WE HAD HOPED YOU MIGHT HELP US ARRANGE A MEETING BY GETTING MR. DOWNING AND YOURSELF TO THE VATICAN.

YOU WANT ME TO GO TO THE VATICAN?!

AS INVITED GUESTS-- AT NO EXPENSE TO YOU, OF COURSE.

AND MORE RECENTLY, YOU ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF YOUR NEW FOUNDATION. TELL US MORE ABOUT THAT.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH WITH IT?

TO HELP OTHERS WHO ARE IN NEED OF HOPE. ESPECIALLY WHEN MODERN MEDICINE HAS FAILED THEM.

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'VE EVER HAD ANYONE IN YOUR FAMILY GET HORRIBLY SICK...?

BUT IF ONE OF YOUR KIDS HAD A BRAIN TUMOR AND THE DOCTORS SAID IT WAS INOPERABLE. WOULD YOU SIT IDLY BY WAITING FOR YOUR TEN YEAR OLD TO DIE-- OR WOULD YOU DO SOMETHING?-- ANYTHING!-- IF GIVEN THE CHANCE?

THE AUTOPSY GUYS STILL HAVEN'T CONFIRMED THE BLOOD SAMPLE FROM THE VICTIMS, BUT... HELLO...? ARE YOU LISTENING?

NOT REALLY. I WANT TO LISTEN TO THE REST OF THIS INTERVIEW.

WHY THE SUDDEN INTEREST? ESPECIALLY WHEN WORK'S PILING UP FROM YOUR OTHER CASES?

BECAUSE HE'S A PART OF THIS.

HOW?

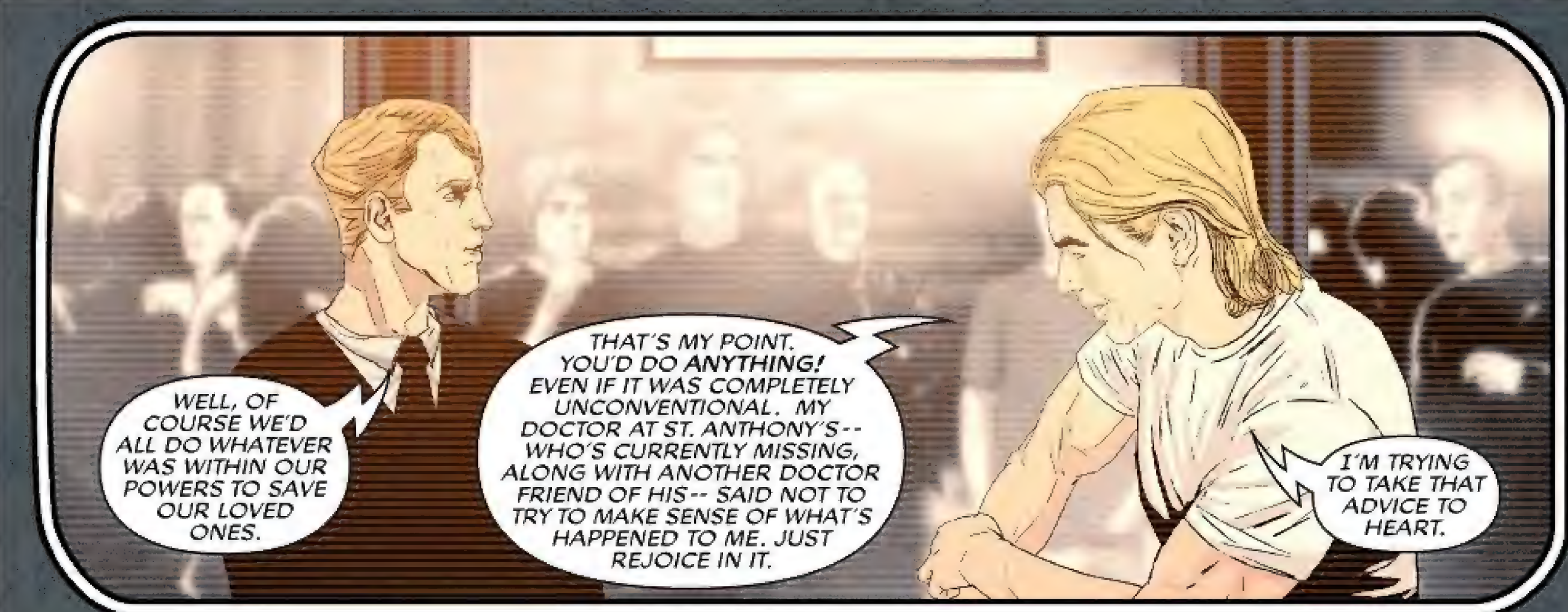
STILL TRYING TO PIECE IT TOGETHER.

LOOK, I DON'T MEAN TO BE RUDE, BUT WE'VE GOT BIGGER FISH TO FRY THAN *SOME FREAK* LOOKING FOR HIS FIFTEEN MINUTES OF FAME.

THAT DOESN'T PRECLUDE US FROM ACKNOWLEDGING HIS POWERS. NOR THE POTENTIAL VALUE THEY HOLD.

HAVE YOU SLIPPED A GEAR? WHAT THE HELL HAS HE GOT TO DO WITH ANYTHING WE NEED? AND I STILL DON'T GET HOW YOU MET HIM IN THE FIRST PLACE.

DETECTIVE ROWAND... HAVE I MENTIONED HOW MUCH YOU'RE BEGINNING TO SOUND JUST LIKE SAM?



WELL, OF COURSE WE'D ALL DO WHATEVER WAS WITHIN OUR POWERS TO SAVE OUR LOVED ONES.

THAT'S MY POINT. YOU'D DO ANYTHING! EVEN IF IT WAS COMPLETELY UNCONVENTIONAL. MY DOCTOR AT ST. ANTHONY'S-- WHO'S CURRENTLY MISSING, ALONG WITH ANOTHER DOCTOR FRIEND OF HIS-- SAID NOT TO TRY TO MAKE SENSE OF WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ME. JUST REJOICE IN IT.

I'M TRYING TO TAKE THAT ADVICE TO HEART.



JESUS CHRIST! HOW'S A GODDAMN INTERVIEW HELPING OUR CASE? THINK ABOUT IT! HE'S NOT GOING TO SAY ANYTHING NEW ON TV.



MAYBE-- BUT WE ALREADY AGREE HE'S SOMEHOW TIED TO YOUR MURDER CASE.* AND THOSE MISSING DOCTORS WERE ON YOUR VICTIM'S CALL LIST.

um... EXCUSE ME, DETECTIVE...

*Issue 185-- Todd



YOUR REPORT FROM THE PRINTS LAB JUST ARRIVED. THEY SAID TO GET IT TO YOU IMMEDIATELY BECAUSE THEY FOUND SOME ANOMALIES WITH YOUR "FAITH HEALER."

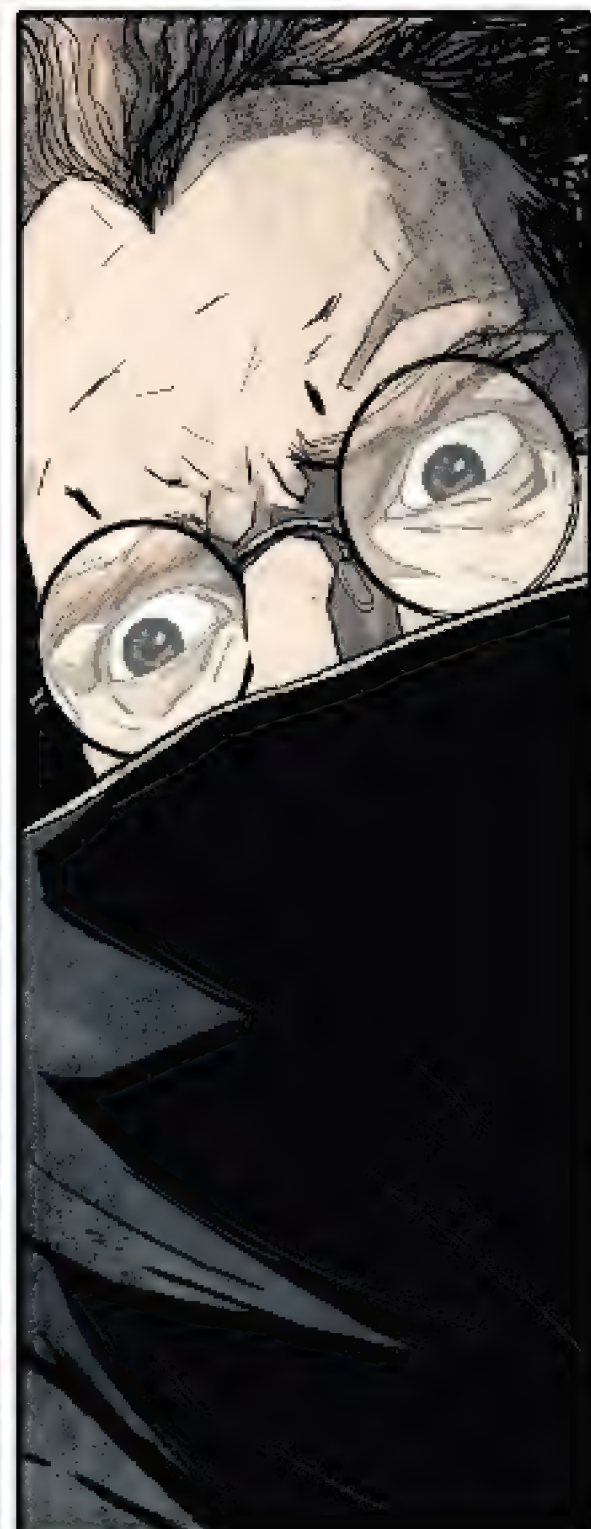
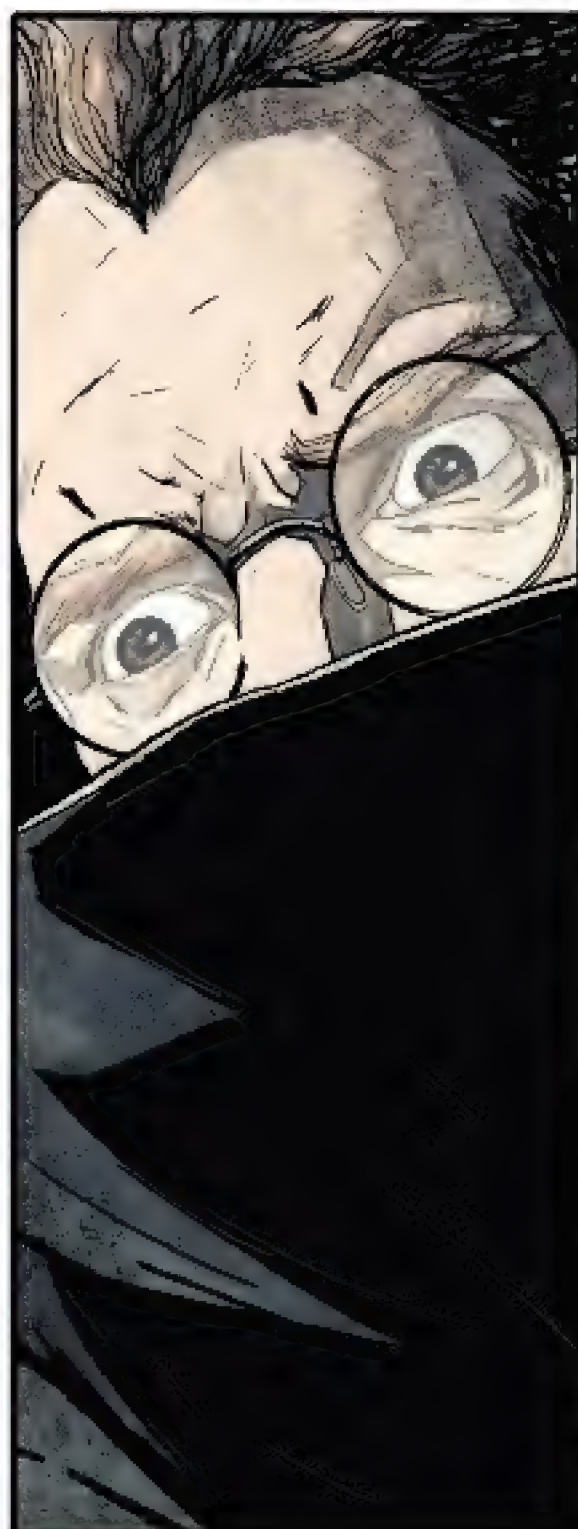
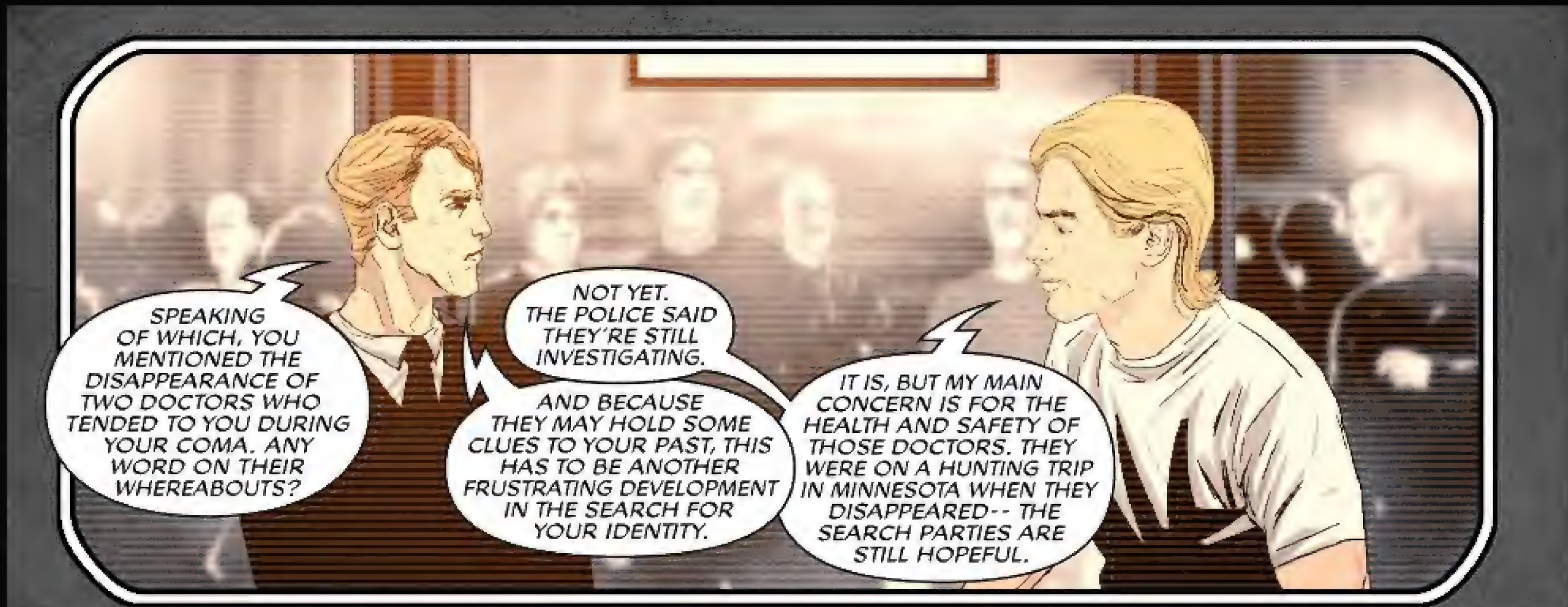
BY THE WAY, HOW'S DETECTIVE BURKE DOING?

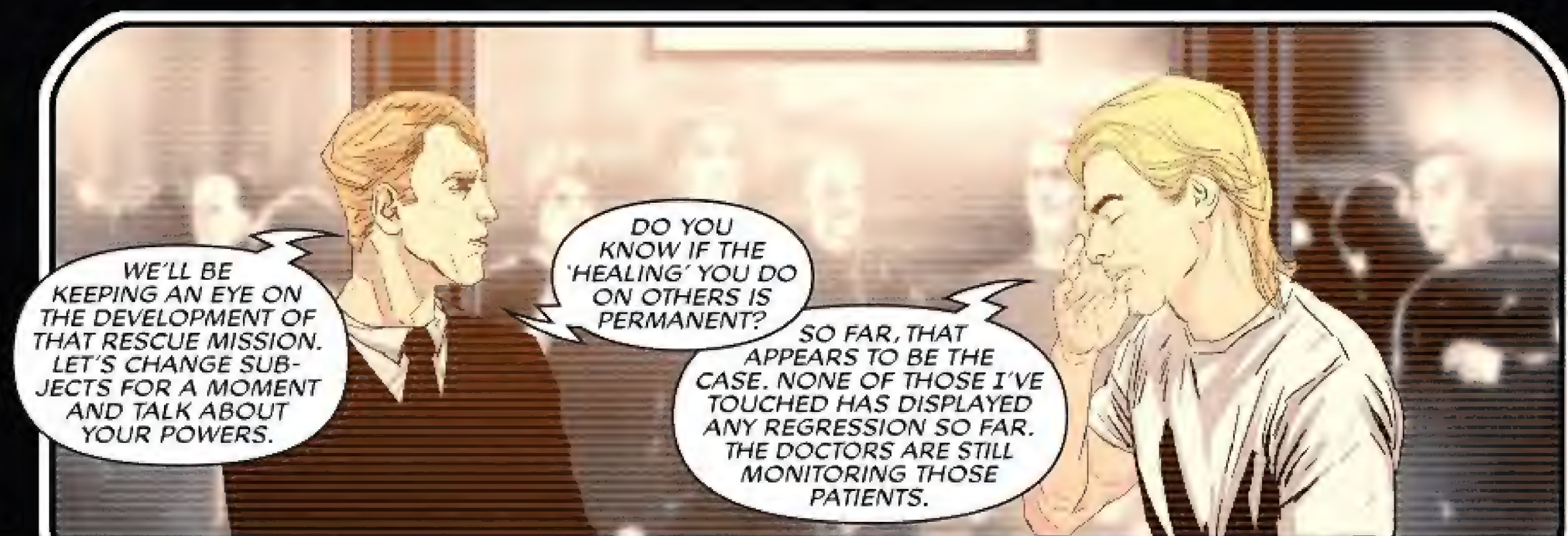


THE SAME. THANKS FOR ASKING.



WHAT'S THE LAB TALKING ABOUT... ANOMALIES?





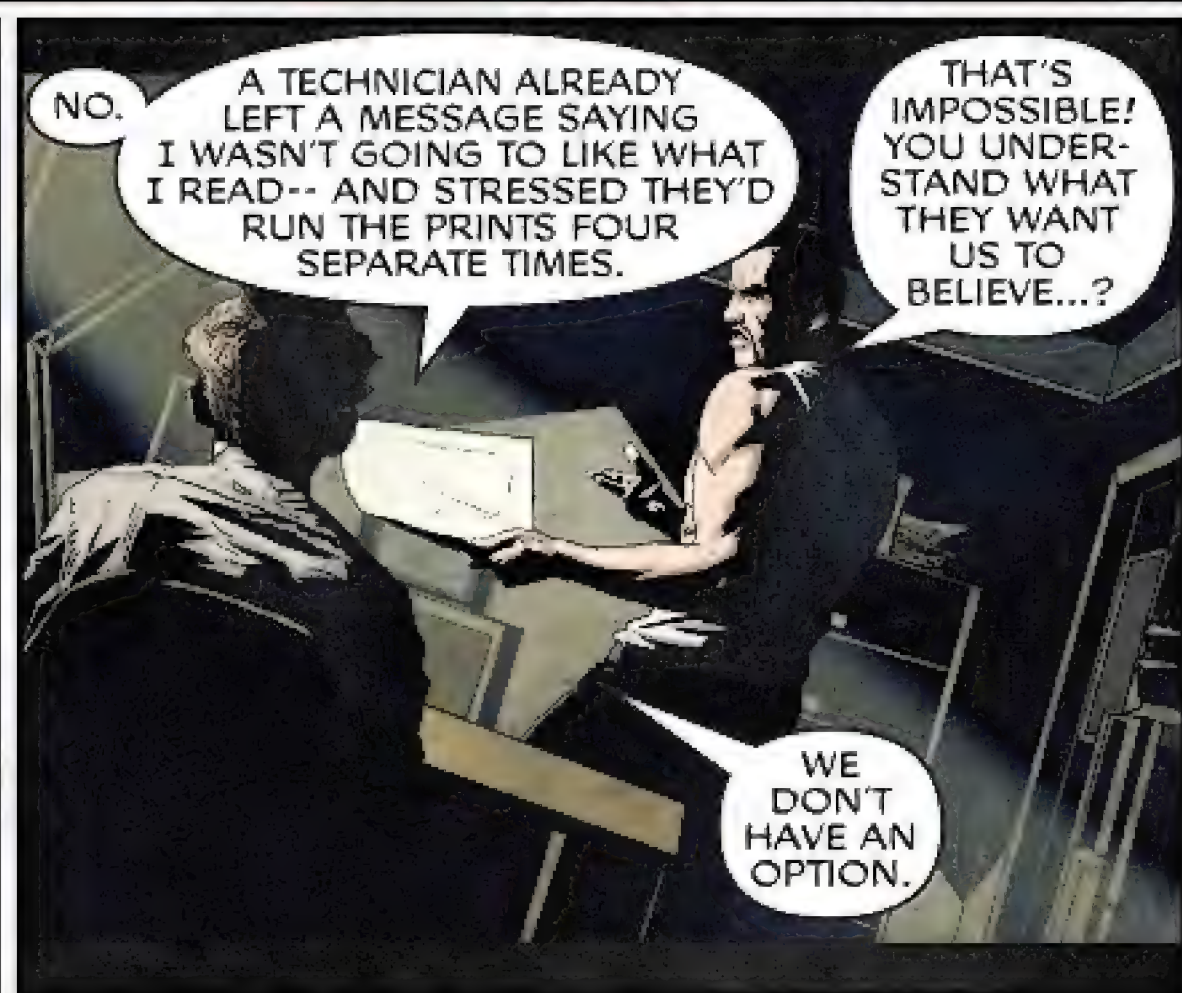
WE'LL BE KEEPING AN EYE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THAT RESCUE MISSION. LET'S CHANGE SUBJECTS FOR A MOMENT AND TALK ABOUT YOUR POWERS.

DO YOU KNOW IF THE 'HEALING' YOU DO ON OTHERS IS PERMANENT?

SO FAR, THAT APPEARS TO BE THE CASE. NONE OF THOSE I'VE TOUCHED HAS DISPLAYED ANY REGRESSION SO FAR. THE DOCTORS ARE STILL MONITORING THOSE PATIENTS.



IS THIS SOME KIND OF JOKE?!



NO.

A TECHNICIAN ALREADY LEFT A MESSAGE SAYING I WASN'T GOING TO LIKE WHAT I READ-- AND STRESSED THEY'D RUN THE PRINTS FOUR SEPARATE TIMES.

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY WANT US TO BELIEVE...?

WE DON'T HAVE AN OPTION.



Wzansky, Saul F.
DOB: 3/17/1974

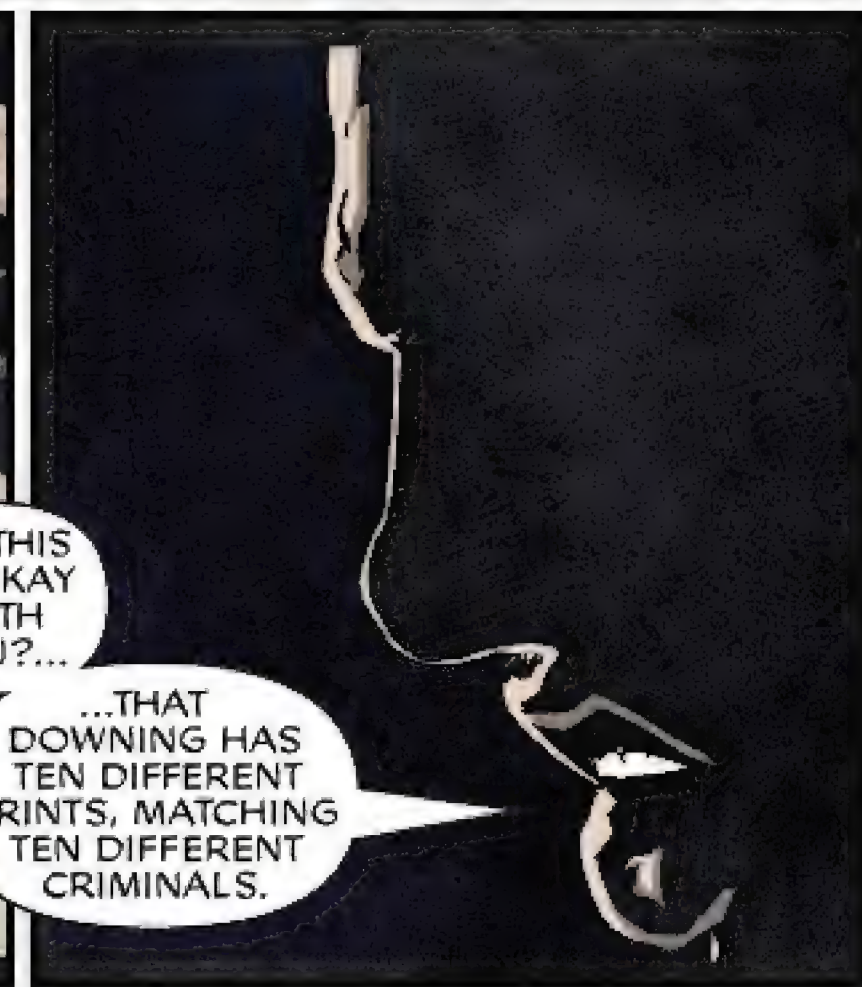
Horn, Jim L.
DOB: 10/4/1981

Berreck, Timothy M.
DOB: 6/28/1974

Ariss, Andrew
DOB: 2/17/1977

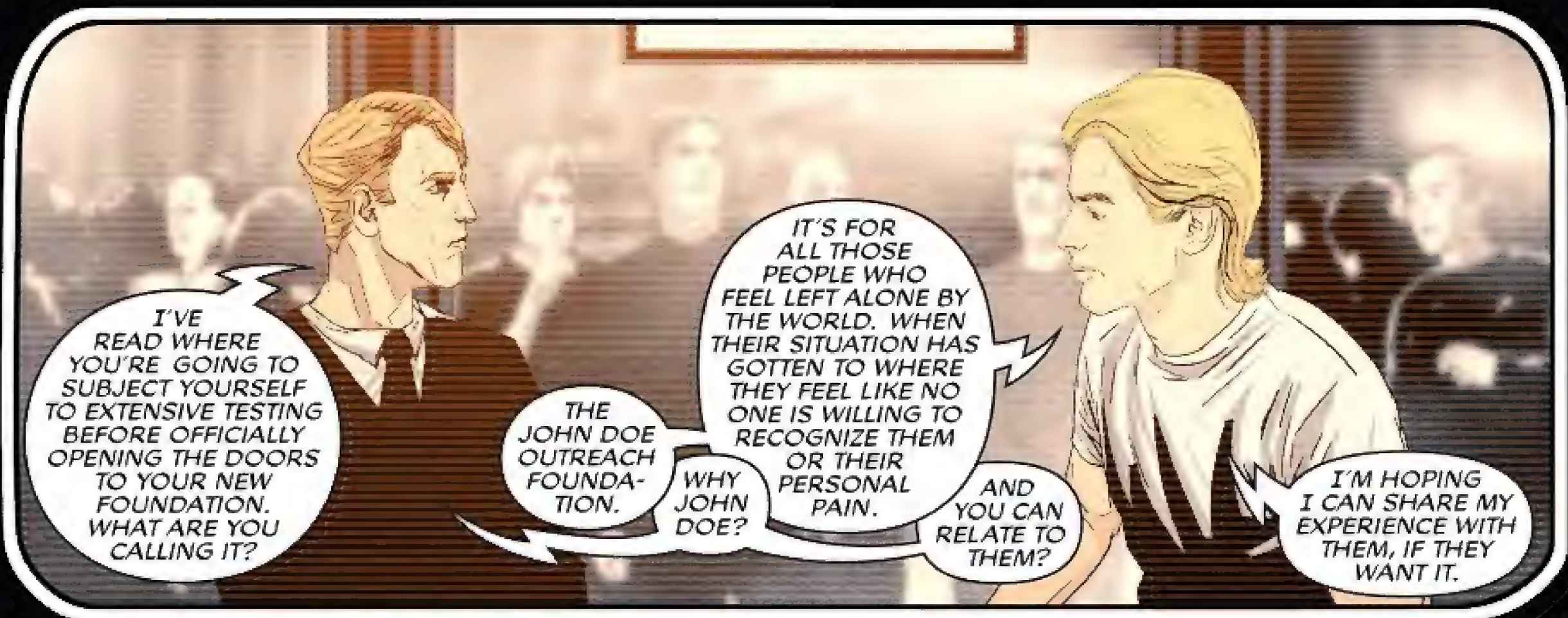
SO THIS IS OKAY WITH YOU?...

...THAT DOWNING HAS TEN DIFFERENT PRINTS, MATCHING TEN DIFFERENT CRIMINALS.



NOT CRIMINALS. MURDERERS.

AND EACH ONE DIED WHILE IMPRISONED... AT TEN DIFFERENT PENITENTIARIES.



I'VE READ WHERE YOU'RE GOING TO SUBJECT YOURSELF TO EXTENSIVE TESTING BEFORE OFFICIALLY OPENING THE DOORS TO YOUR NEW FOUNDATION. WHAT ARE YOU CALLING IT?

THE JOHN DOE OUTREACH FOUNDATION.

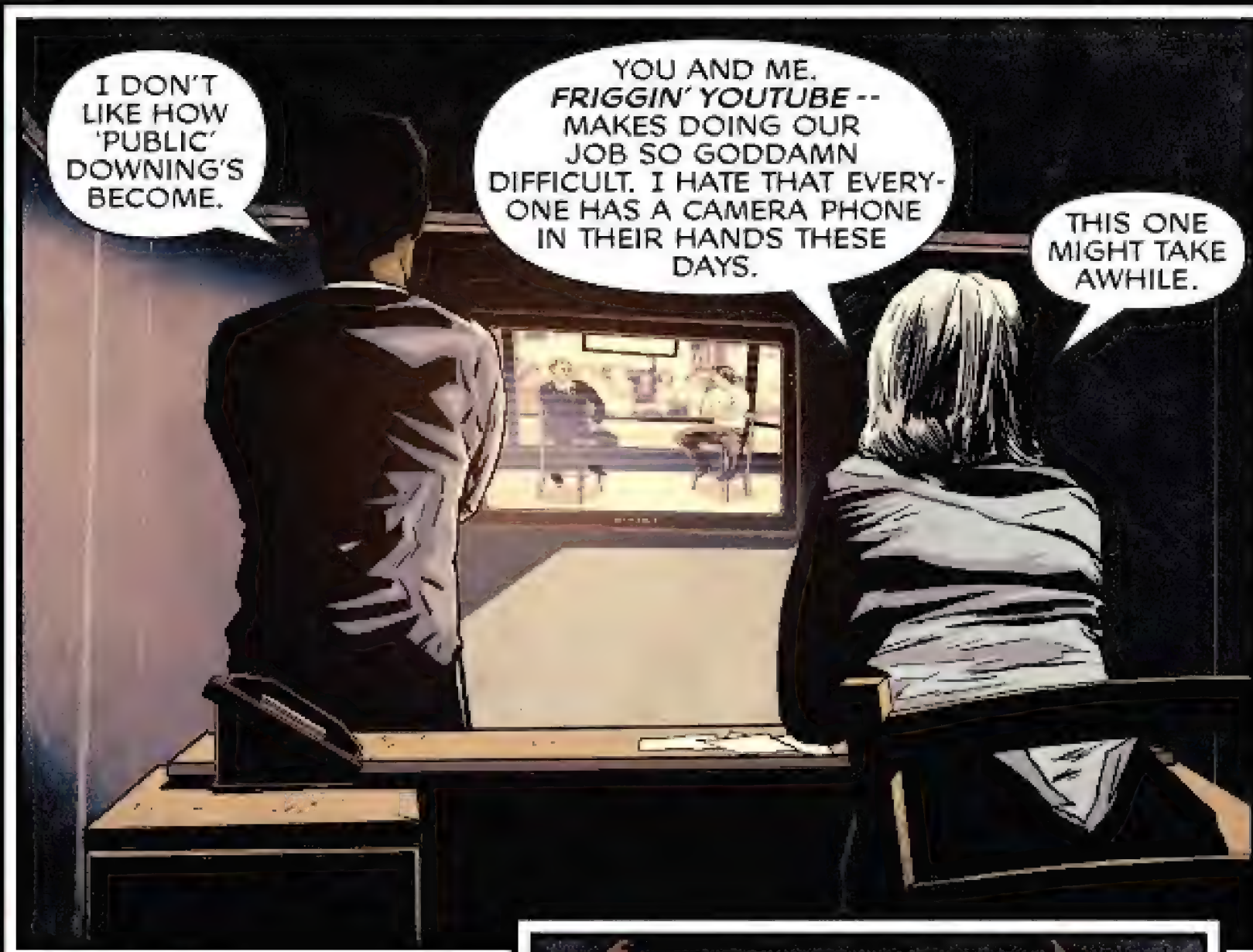
WHY JOHN DOE?

IT'S FOR ALL THOSE PEOPLE WHO FEEL LEFT ALONE BY THE WORLD. WHEN THEIR SITUATION HAS GOTTEN TO WHERE THEY FEEL LIKE NO ONE IS WILLING TO RECOGNIZE THEM OR THEIR PERSONAL PAIN.

AND YOU CAN RELATE TO THEM?

I'M HOPING I CAN SHARE MY EXPERIENCE WITH THEM, IF THEY WANT IT.

C.I.A. SUBSTATION.
NEW YORK CITY.



I DON'T LIKE HOW 'PUBLIC' DOWNING'S BECOME.

YOU AND ME, FRIGGIN' YOUTUBE -- MAKES DOING OUR JOB SO GODDAMN DIFFICULT. I HATE THAT EVERYONE HAS A CAMERA PHONE IN THEIR HANDS THESE DAYS.

THIS ONE MIGHT TAKE AWHILE.

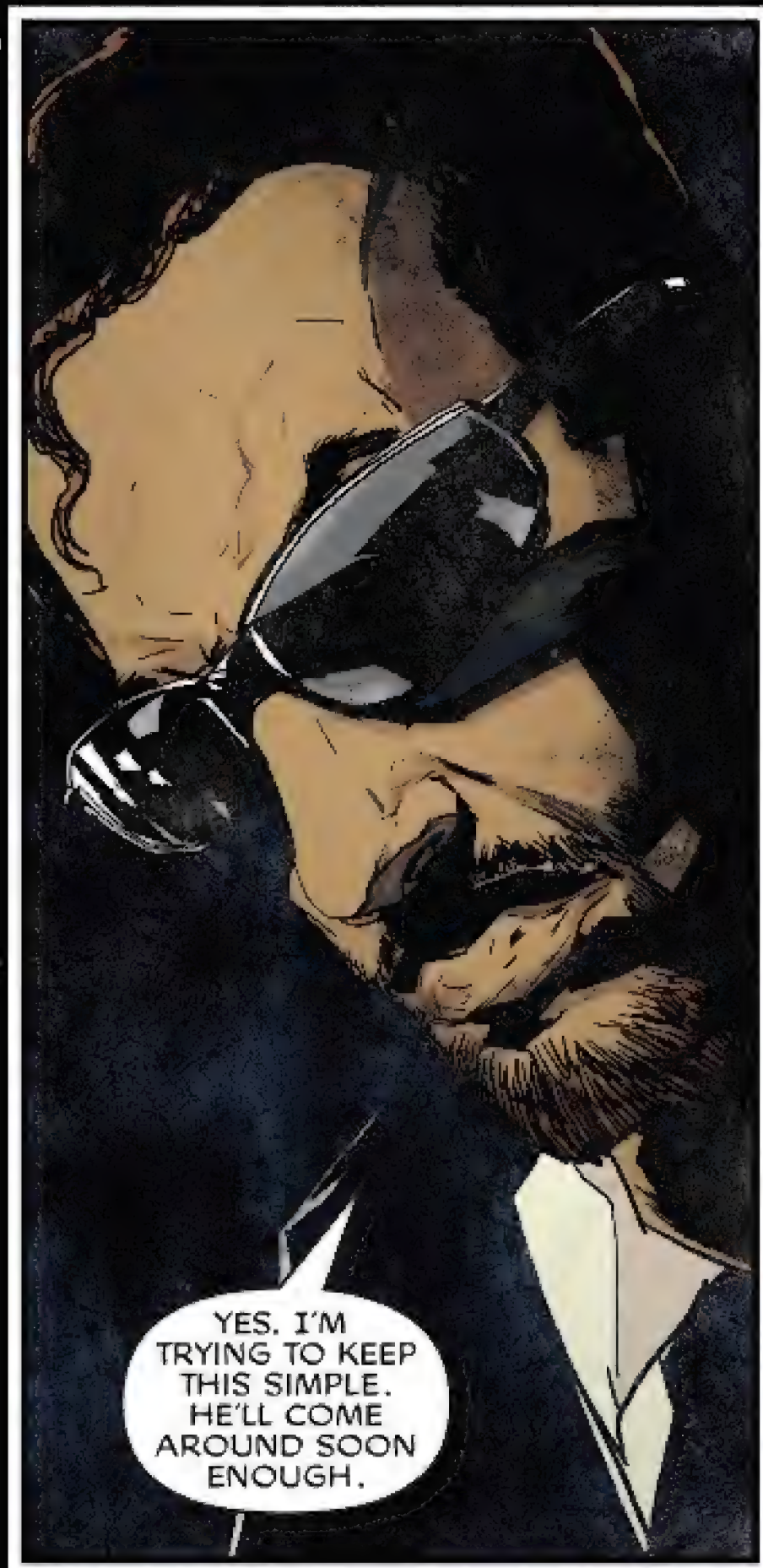


SO, THIS MARC ROSEN CHARACTER-- DID HE TAKE THE BAIT?

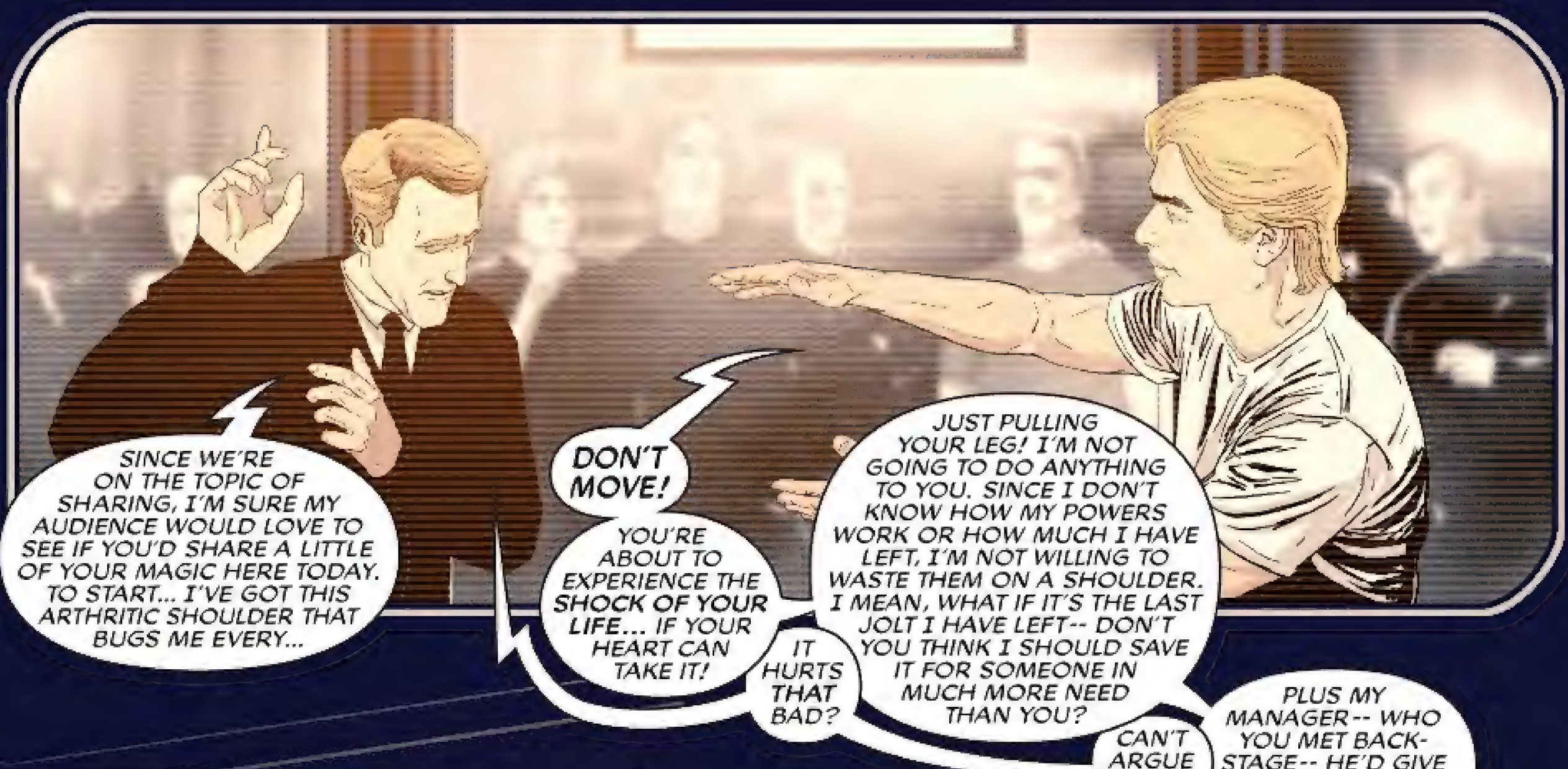
NOT YET.

BUT WHEN HE FINDS OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO HIS FELLOW REPORTERS, THEIR DEATHS SHOULD SCARE HIM RIGHT INTO OUR TRAP.

DID YOU GIVE HIM YOUR CARD?



YES. I'M TRYING TO KEEP THIS SIMPLE. HE'LL COME AROUND SOON ENOUGH.



SINCE WE'RE ON THE TOPIC OF SHARING, I'M SURE MY AUDIENCE WOULD LOVE TO SEE IF YOU'D SHARE A LITTLE OF YOUR MAGIC HERE TODAY. TO START... I'VE GOT THIS ARTHRITIC SHOULDER THAT BUGS ME EVERY...

DON'T MOVE!

YOU'RE ABOUT TO EXPERIENCE THE SHOCK OF YOUR LIFE... IF YOUR HEART CAN TAKE IT!

IT HURTS THAT BAD?

JUST PULLING YOUR LEG! I'M NOT GOING TO DO ANYTHING TO YOU. SINCE I DON'T KNOW HOW MY POWERS WORK OR HOW MUCH I HAVE LEFT, I'M NOT WILLING TO WASTE THEM ON A SHOULDER. I MEAN, WHAT IF IT'S THE LAST JOLT I HAVE LEFT-- DON'T YOU THINK I SHOULD SAVE IT FOR SOMEONE IN MUCH MORE NEED THAN YOU?

CAN'T ARGUE THERE.

PLUS MY MANAGER-- WHO YOU MET BACK-STAGE-- HE'D GIVE ME HECK FOR NOT TAKING ALL OF THIS SERIOUSLY.

GREEN ROOM. MORNING SHOW. NEW YORK CITY.



WELL, I'VE READ YOUR FOUNDATION'S MISSION STATEMENT AND IT ALL SOUNDS QUITE SERIOUS. I DIDN'T MEAN TO USE MY SITUATION TO TRIVIALIZE THOSE WHO REALLY NEED YOUR HELP.



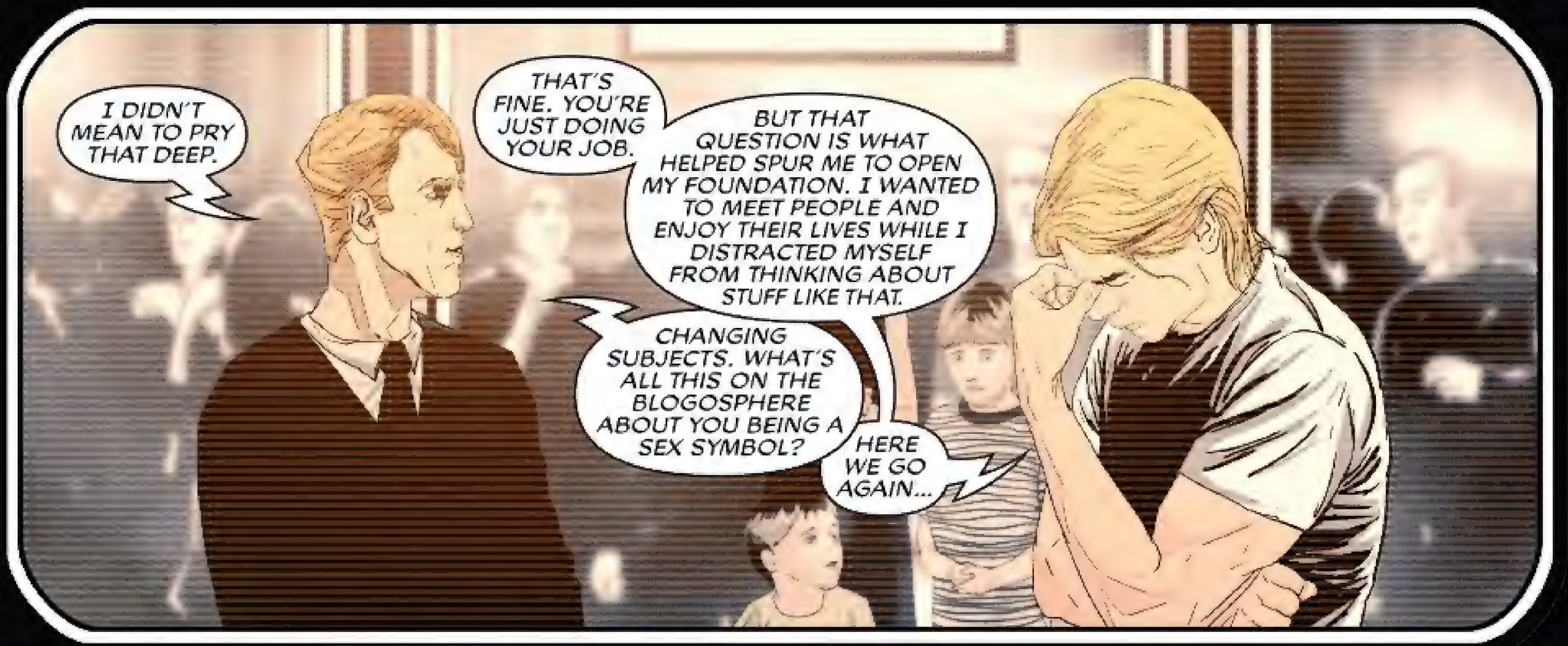
THAT'S OKAY, BUT YOU'RE RIGHT. WE'RE GOING TO NEED TO PEOPLE TO BELIEVE THAT WE'RE TAKING THEIR ISSUES SERIOUSLY.

THAT TRUST WILL BE VERY IMPORTANT, WON'T IT?



TMP LIMITED
TERENCE FITZGERALD
DIRECTOR OF ACQUISITIONS
AND LIQUIDATIONS
555-627-1996
tfitzgerald@tmp.com





I DIDN'T MEAN TO PRY THAT DEEP.

THAT'S FINE. YOU'RE JUST DOING YOUR JOB.

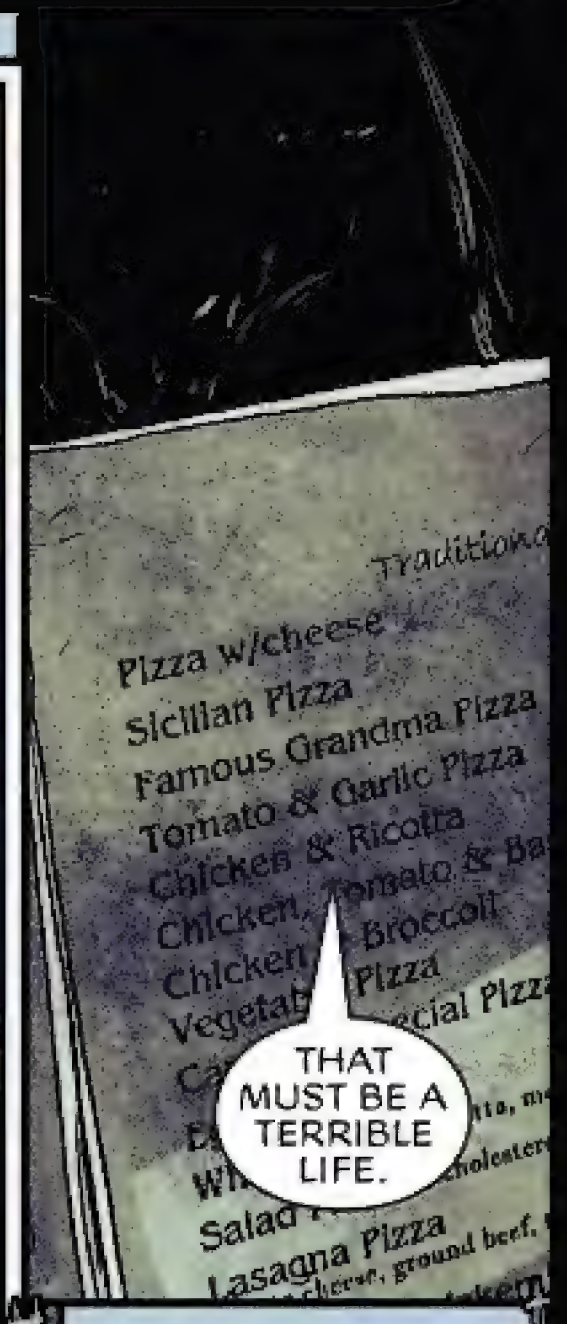
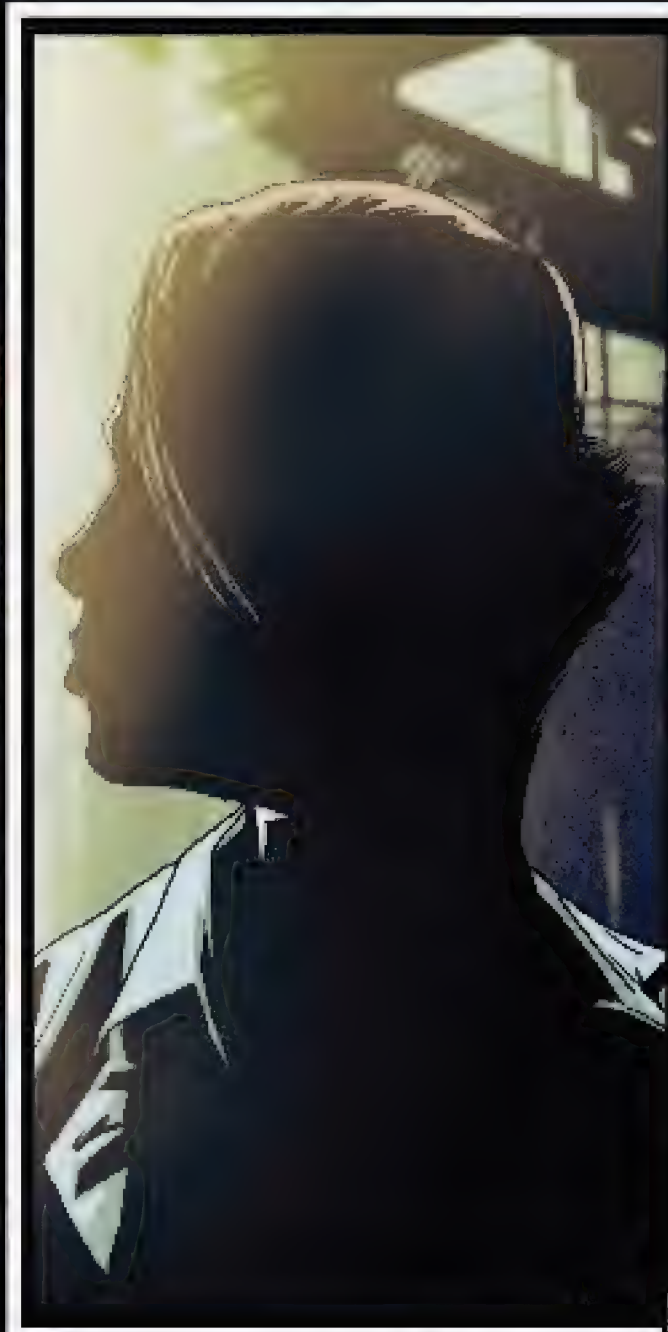
BUT THAT QUESTION IS WHAT HELPED SPUR ME TO OPEN MY FOUNDATION. I WANTED TO MEET PEOPLE AND ENJOY THEIR LIVES WHILE I DISTRACTED MYSELF FROM THINKING ABOUT STUFF LIKE THAT.

CHANGING SUBJECTS. WHAT'S ALL THIS ON THE BLOGOSPHERE ABOUT YOU BEING A SEX SYMBOL?

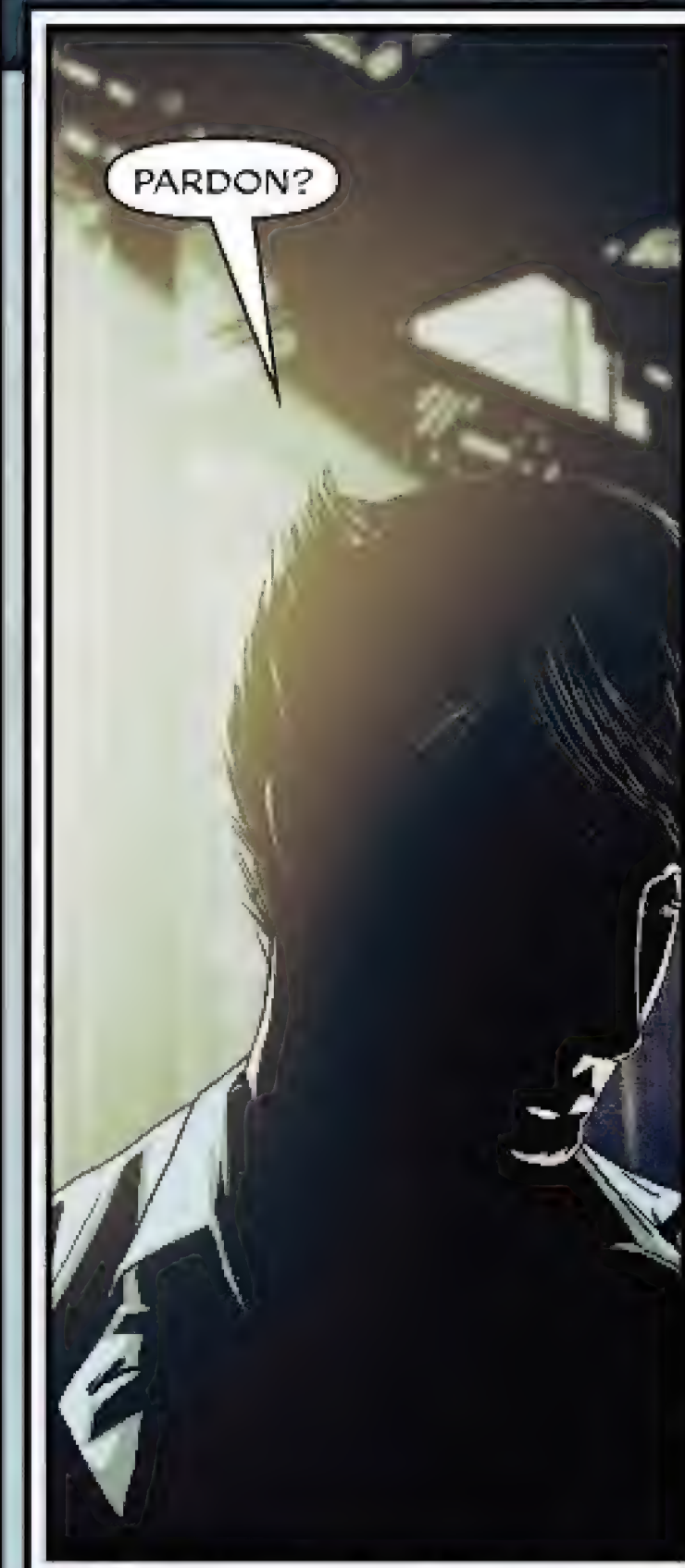
HERE WE GO AGAIN...



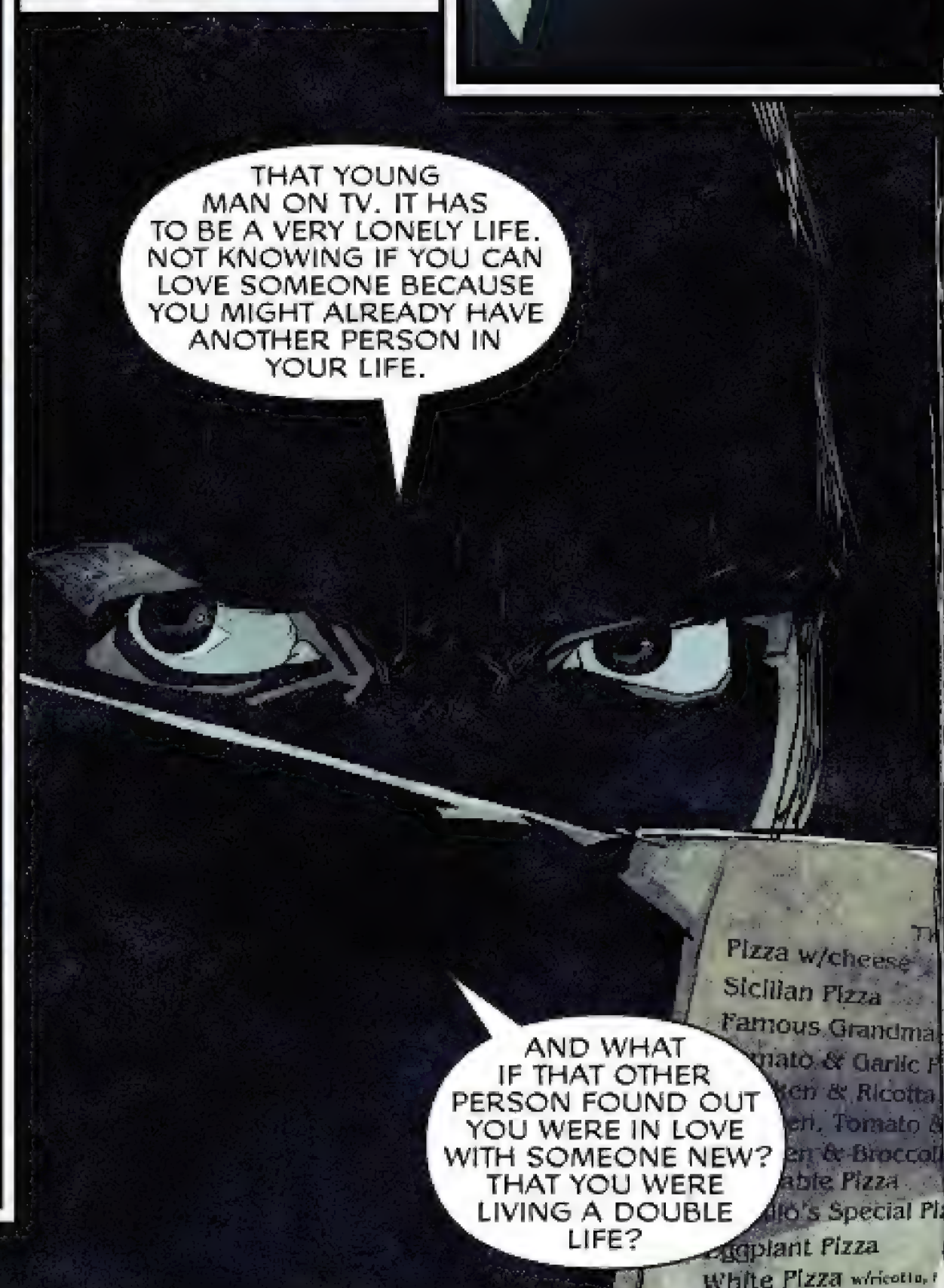
WHAT? YOU'RE BLUSHING, AREN'T YOU?



THAT MUST BE A TERRIBLE LIFE.



PARDON?



THAT YOUNG MAN ON TV. IT HAS TO BE A VERY LONELY LIFE. NOT KNOWING IF YOU CAN LOVE SOMEONE BECAUSE YOU MIGHT ALREADY HAVE ANOTHER PERSON IN YOUR LIFE.

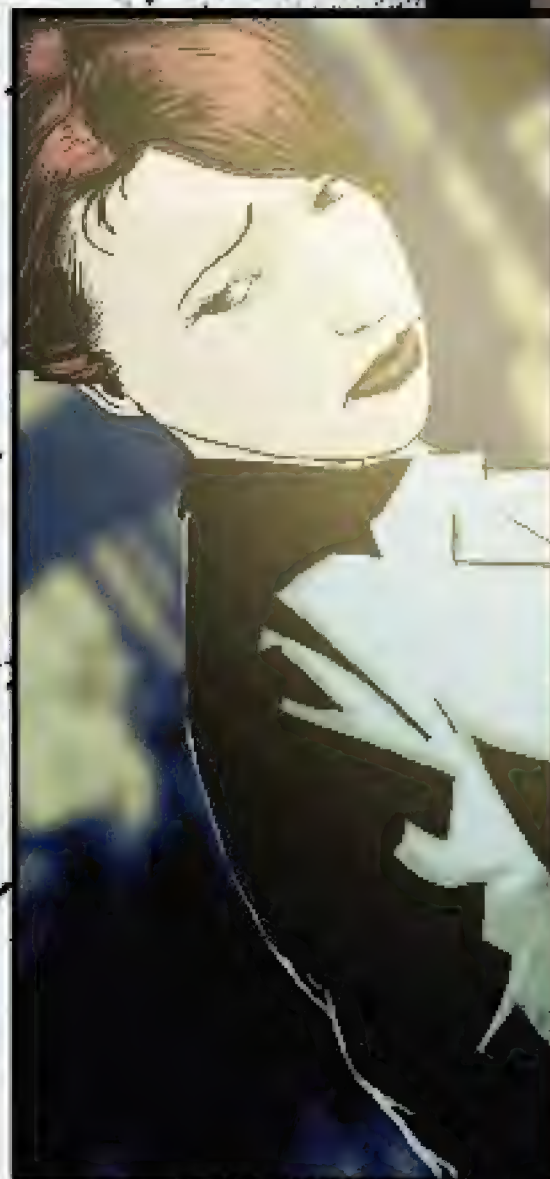
AND WHAT IF THAT OTHER PERSON FOUND OUT YOU WERE IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE NEW? THAT YOU WERE LIVING A DOUBLE LIFE?

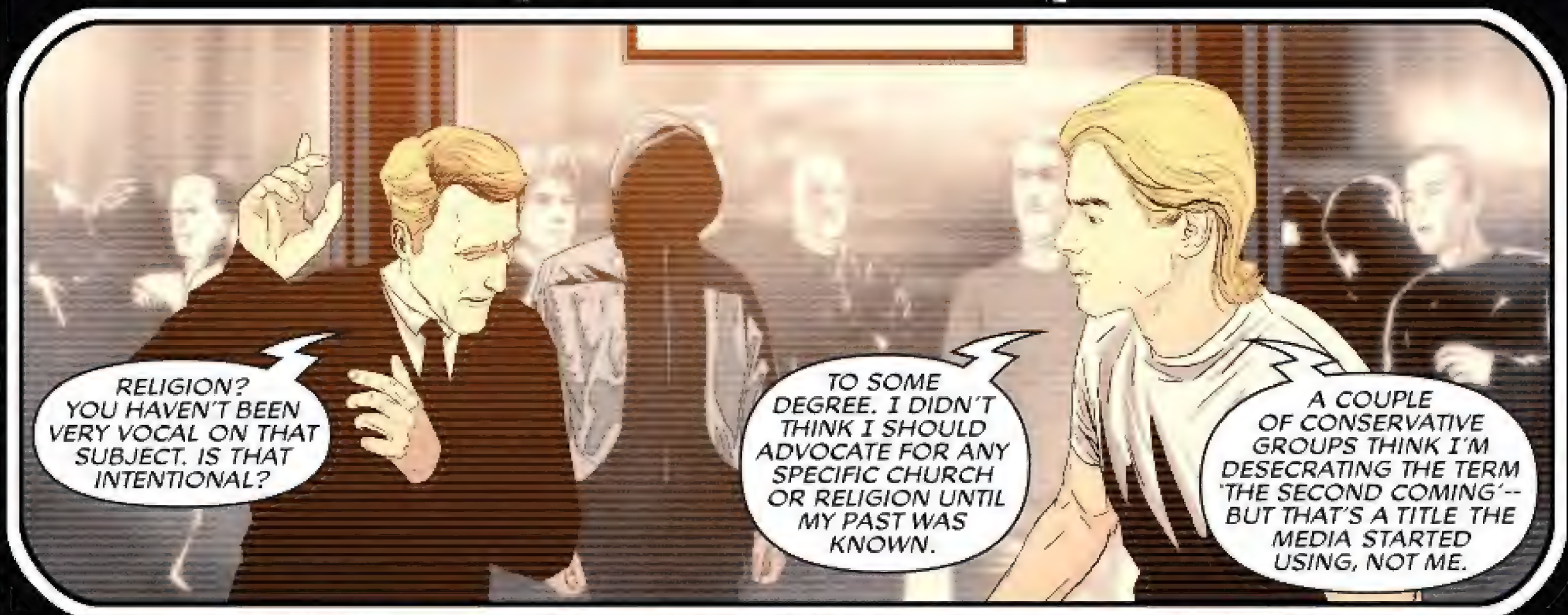




BUT THEN AGAIN, WHAT KIND OF EXISTENCE IS IT TO KNOW THAT THE PERSON YOU SO *DESPERATELY DESIRE*-- THE ONE YOU KNOW WILL MAKE EVERYTHING RIGHT IN YOUR LIFE-- IS SOMEONE YOU CAN'T HAVE...?

SOMETHING LIKE THAT CAN TORTURE YOU TO THE DEPTHS OF YOUR SOUL-- MAKE YOU WONDER WHETHER YOU'LL *EVER* FIND THAT KIND OF HAPPINESS AGAIN. AND WORSE THAN THAT-- YOU'D HAVE TO GO BACK TO YOUR OLD LOVER AND LIVE A LIE FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.





RELIGION?
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN
VERY VOCAL ON THAT
SUBJECT. IS THAT
INTENTIONAL?

TO SOME
DEGREE. I DIDN'T
THINK I SHOULD
ADVOCATE FOR ANY
SPECIFIC CHURCH
OR RELIGION UNTIL
MY PAST WAS
KNOWN.

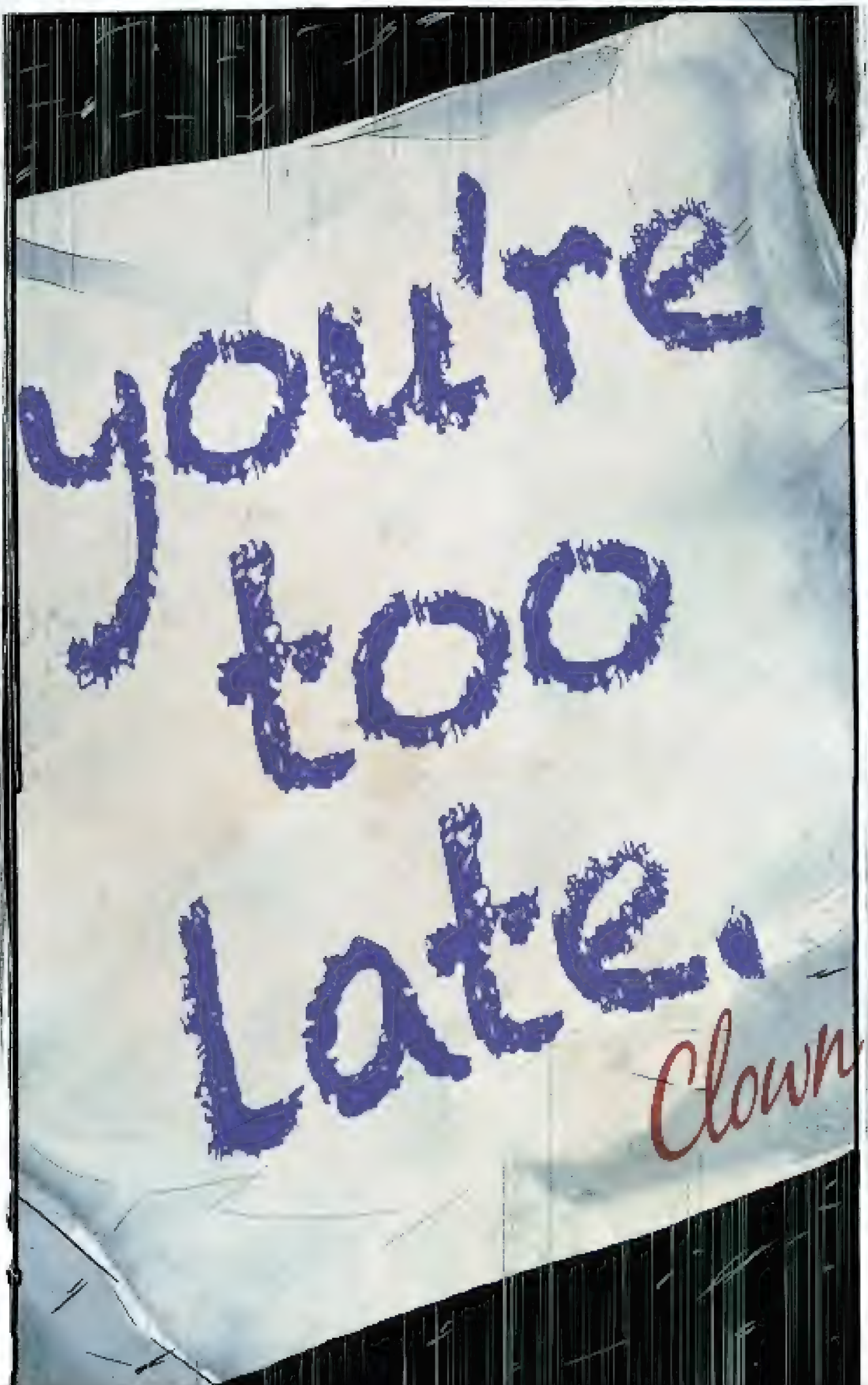
A COUPLE
OF CONSERVATIVE
GROUPS THINK I'M
DESECRATING THE TERM
'THE SECOND COMING'--
BUT THAT'S A TITLE THE
MEDIA STARTED
USING, NOT ME.



HEMPSTEAD,
ARKANSAS.



IT'S
TIME, FALLEN
SOLDIER-- TO
TAKE BACK
WHAT'S
MINE.





A dramatic comic book illustration of a character with a large, white, segmented jaw and a mask-like face, set against a dark, textured background. The character's face is pale and mask-like, with a large, dark, oval eye. The jaw is wide open, revealing a row of white, segmented teeth. The character is wearing a dark, textured garment. The background is dark and textured, with some white, jagged lines suggesting a rocky or metallic surface. In the bottom right corner, there is a small white speech bubble containing the text "SO SHOT DOWN S".

A comic book panel showing three men in suits in a room with a large urn. One man asks, "WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PICTURE?!" and another responds, "Oh my God!". The third man's speech bubble is partially visible on the right, containing the text "YO" and "WE".

A comic book panel showing three men in suits in a room with a large urn. One man asks, "WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PICTURE?!" and another responds, "Oh my God!". The third man's speech bubble is partially visible on the right, containing the text "YO" and "WE".

GENTLEMEN--
PLEASE. I NEED
YOU TO CALM DOWN.
EVERYTHING WILL
BE FINE... AND
WHAT YOU JUST SAW
WILL BE **GREAT**
FOR BUSINESS.

THE
FUTURE IS
LOOKING
BRIGHT.





next: **ORIGINAL SINS**

20TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2012

20
1992-2012
image
216
DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN[®]



McFARLANE
JCO

WHAT'S
HIS CURRENT
CONDITION?

ALL HIS
MAJOR ORGANS
STILL SEEM TO
BE FUNCTIONING, BUT
THE PATIENT'S VITALS
ARE SHOWING SIGNS
OF EXTREME
DISTRESS!



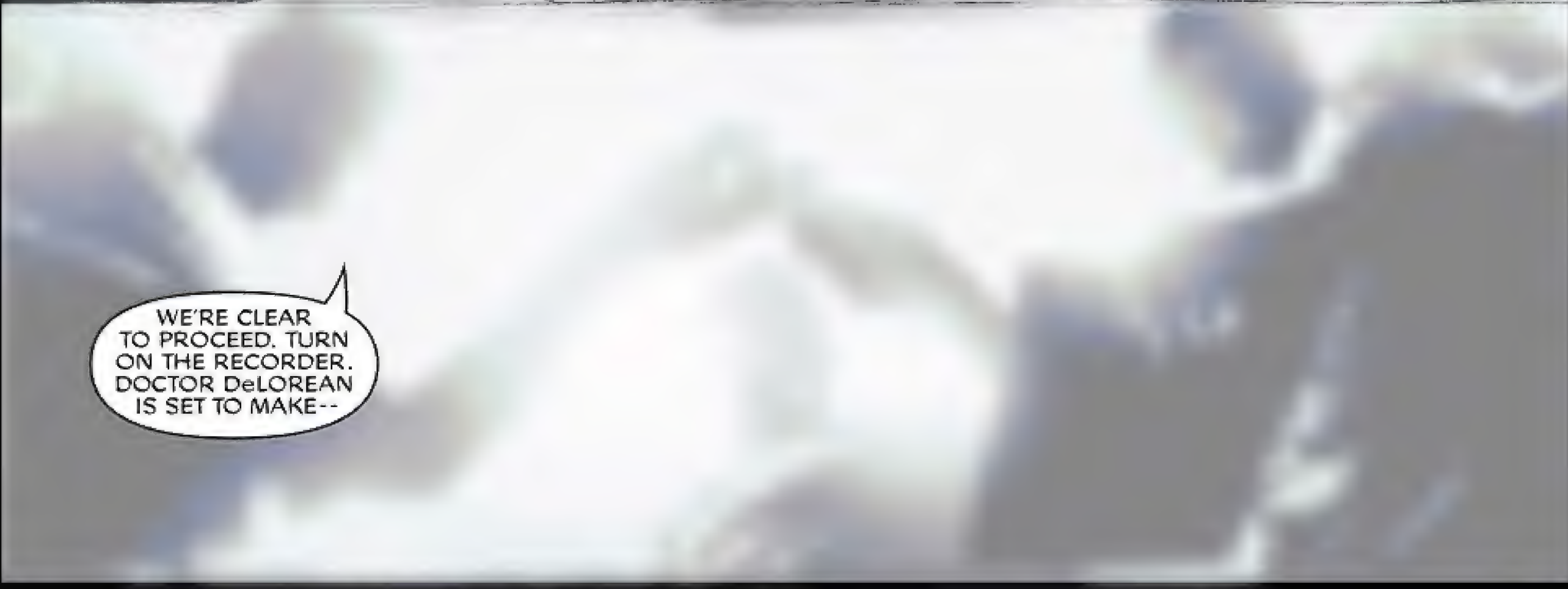
STRAP HIM
DOWN! IF WE HOPE
FOR ANY SUCCESS, WE'LL
NEED HIM STABILIZED FOR
THE PROCEDURE. HE CAN'T
AFFORD TO LOSE ANY
MORE BLOOD.



UP THE DOSAGE
ON THE ANESTHETIC!
WE NEED HIS READINGS
AT MANAGEABLE LEVELS.
FINISH THE PREP NOW--
WE DON'T HAVE
MUCH TIME!



VITALS ARE
STABILIZING. BP IS
126-OVER-81. HEART RATE
IS *SLIPPING!* WE'RE NOW AT
70 BEATS PER MINUTE. WE'LL TRY
HOLDING THERE-- ADMINISTERING
THE I.V.-- SOMEONE WATCH FOR A
REACTION TO THE FLUIDS. HE
CAN'T DROP SIGNIFICANTLY
FROM HERE ON
OUT.



WE'RE CLEAR
TO PROCEED. TURN
ON THE RECORDER.
DOCTOR DeLOREAN
IS SET TO MAKE--



--THE FIRST
INCISION.

MAKING
VERTICAL INCISION
INTO CHEST CAVITY. NO
RESPONSE FROM
PATIENT. ANESTHETIC
HOLDING. PROCEDURE
UNDERWAY AS OF
--TIME?

0807
HOURS,
MOUNTAIN
STANDARD
TIME.

FIRST
INCISION
COMPLETE.



PREPARING
FOR SECONDARY
INCISION BENEATH SKIN,
THROUGH MUSCLE TISSUE,
IN PREPARATION FOR THE
NEXT STAGE. ALL TRANS-
FUSIONS ALSO
COMPLETE.



BEGIN...
WHOA! WE HAVE
A **PROBLEM** HERE,
FOLKS! THE PATIENT'S
EYES APPEAR TO BE--
CHRIST!! HE'S
WAKING UP!

A CLASSIFIED GOVERNMENT
FACILITY. MANY YEARS AGO.

SOMEONE--
**RESTRAIN
HIM!!**

GET
SECURITY
UP HERE...
NOW!



HE CONTINUES TO REJECT ALL ANESTHETIC. THIS IS THE THIRD SURGERY WE'VE ATTEMPTED THIS MONTH.

HIS PREVIOUS OPERATIONS WERE SUCCESSFUL AND WITHOUT INCIDENT, BUT WE CAN'T MOVE FORWARD UNTIL WE SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENT THE COMPLETE SPECTRUM OF OUR NEW PROCESS.

OUR PROBLEM IS THAT THIS PATIENT HAS BEGUN EXHIBITING SIGNS OF LOST COGNIZANCE. AND AS HE LOSES HIS EMOTIONAL GRIP ON REALITY...



...WE BELIEVE IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF WEEKS-- MAYBE DAYS-- BEFORE HE'S COMPLETELY INSANE.

WHICH WILL RENDER ANY OF HIS *POSITIVE* PHYSICAL RESULTS USELESS.



STILL, IF THEY CAN RESTORE HIS MENTAL CAPACITY TO ITS NORMAL STATE, WE'LL HAVE MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN BOTH MOLECULAR AND TEMPORAL RESTORATION.

YOUR GOAL OF DESIGNING AND REPLICATING THE 'PERFECT HUMAN' WILL FINALLY BE WITHIN YOUR GRASP.

THEN YOU CAN BEGIN BUILDING US AN ARMY OF THEM!...



...SO LONG AS WE MAINTAIN "THE PROJECT'S" COMPLETE SECRECY. ISN'T THAT RIGHT, DIRECTOR?





MY PEOPLE ARE LOYAL. THEY UNDERSTAND THE CONSEQUENCES OF ANYTHING LEAKING OUT. SO IT'S NOT MY END YOU NEED TO BE WORRIED ABOUT.

BUT I UNDERSTAND YOUR FRUSTRATION. FOR WHATEVER REASON, THIS PATIENT OBVIOUSLY DOESN'T POSSESS THE QUALITIES WE NEED.

THE DOCTORS ASSURED ME HE WAS THE BEST CANDIDATE FROM THE GROUP THEY CHOSE FROM, THOUGH. AND I READ THE CHARTS ON HIS D.N.A. SAMPLING ALONG WITH HIS MENTAL PROFILE. BOTH INDICATED THAT MR. KULBICZI HAD THE X-FACTOR WE WERE LOOKING FOR.

WE'LL NEED TO FIND ANOTHER SUBJECT.

YOU DO KNOW THAT CAN TAKE SOME TIME. HOPEFULLY, YOU CAN EXTEND THE PROJECT DELIVERY TIME WITH YOUR PENTAGON FRIENDS. I'LL MAKE SURE MY STAFF UNDERSTANDS THE SEVERITY OF THIS FAILURE.



I'LL GET YOU YOUR TIME.

BUT YOU GET ME A PATIENT I CAN COUNT ON.



SO... YOU WANT TO MAKE HIM MY PROBLEM NOW?

WHAT'S THE MATTER? CAN'T CONTROL THE HIRED HELP?

I'VE BEEN HEARING RUMORS YOUR OPERATION ISN'T... UM, 'ACCELERATING'... AT THE RATE YOU'D EXPECTED. THAT'S SURPRISING, GIVEN THE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE WE'VE DEVOTED TO YOUR LABS THESE PAST FEW YEARS.

MOST OF WHAT YOU'VE DONE IS GREATLY APPRECIATED-- BUT NONE OF THE PAPERS, PATENTS OR SCIENTISTS YOU'VE PROVIDED HAVE DONE ANY BETTER JOB AT SOLVING OUR PROBLEM THAN WHAT WAS ALREADY IN PROCESS.

THAT'S NOT TRUE. YOU MADE GREAT STRIDES WITH PATIENT 22.

UNTIL HE DIED.

BUT HE TOOK YOU TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

IT DOESN'T MATTER. HE WAS STILL A FAILURE. AND THE LAST FIVE PATIENTS PROVED THAT TO BE TRUE. SO WE'RE WILLING TO TRY SOMETHING NEW.

YOU'VE BEEN BRAGGING ABOUT YOUR GERMAN DOCTORS AND THEIR DNA SPLICING FOR QUITE A WHILE. IT'S TIME TO PUT THEM TO THE TEST.

I DON'T HAVE THE LUXURY OF RELOCATING THEM HERE AND GETTING THEM RAMPED UP TO OUR SPECS. WHICH MEANS YOU'LL TAKE OUR 'VOLUNTEER' HERE TO GERMANY, AND PREP HIM SO MY DOCTORS CAN COMPLETE THE NEXT OPERATION.

please...



DON'T DO THIS.

SHUT UP, RICHARD!

YOU DON'T HAVE A SAY IN ANY OF THIS. YOU SEALED YOUR FATE WITH YOUR BETRAYAL.





WE
RECEIVED
THE REPORT
LATE LAST
NIGHT...

I THOUGHT
YOU SHOULD
SEE THIS
FIRST.



AS YOU KNOW,
WE'VE BEEN MONITORING
NORTEGO'S GERMAN LABS
FROM A DISTANCE, SINCE WE
ALSO HAVE A VESTED INTEREST
IN THEIR RESEARCH. OUR
'PLANT' TRANSMITTED THE
LATEST RESULTS FROM THEIR
EXPERIMENTS ON PATIENT 29...
THE CIVILIAN YOU KNEW AS
RICHARD MASULLO.



WERE
NORTEGO'S
PEOPLE TRYING TO
SUPPRESS THE
NEWS OF THIS
OUTCOME?



WE DON'T
KNOW. WE'RE
STILL TRYING TO
DETERMINE
THAT.

BUT THE
BIGGER ISSUE
IS THE POTENTIAL
IMPACT THIS
HAS FOR BOTH
OF US.



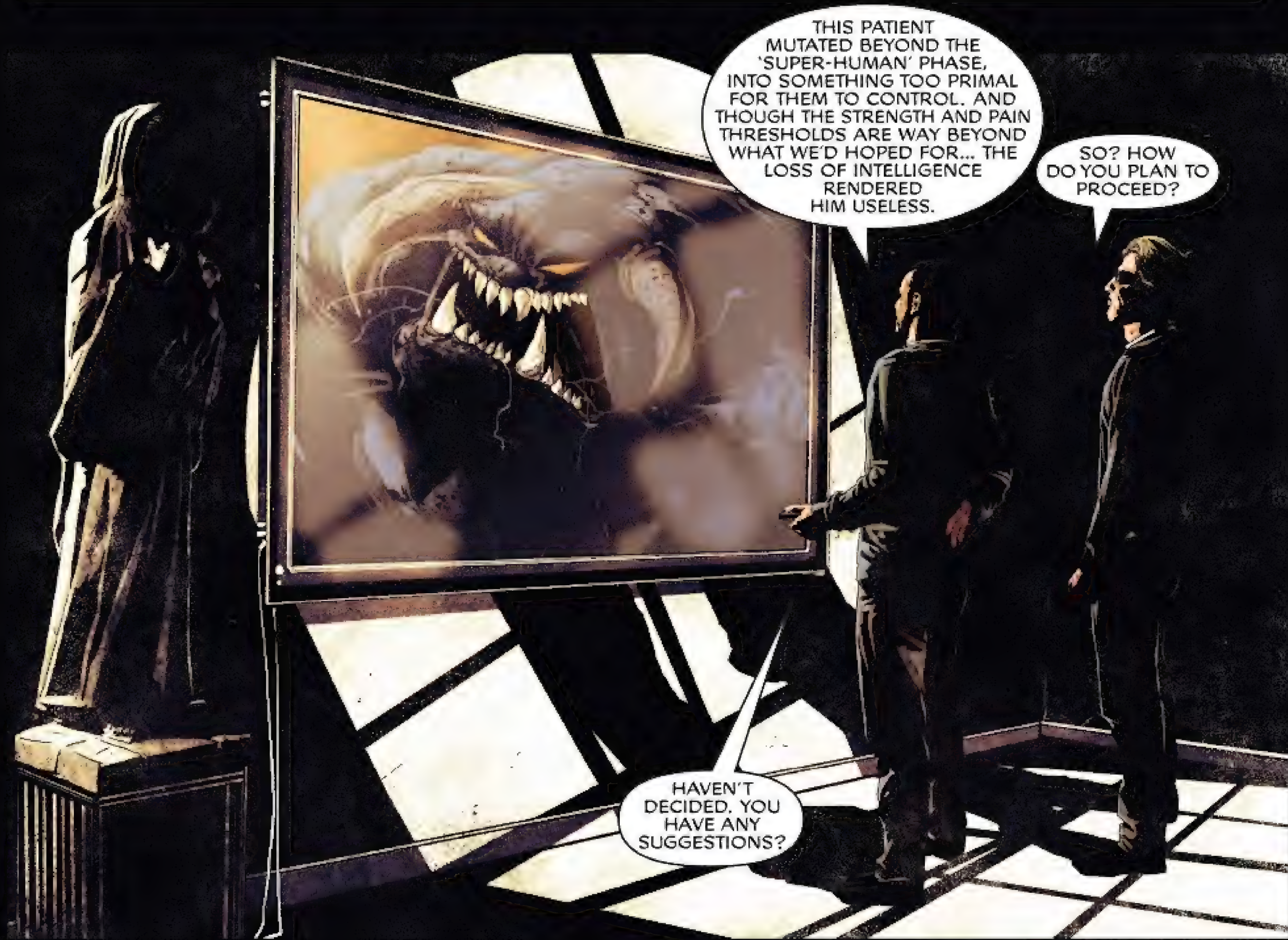
WE BOTH
NEEDED THIS
NEW D.N.A.
SEQUENCE TO
BE STABLE...



...AT
LEAST LONG
ENOUGH FOR
US TO INFUSE
IT WITH THOSE
WE BUILT
HERE.



BUT NOT
ONLY WON'T THEY
BE COMPATIBLE--
THERE ARE **SEVERE**
SIDE EFFECTS
INVOLVED.



THIS PATIENT
MUTATED BEYOND THE
'SUPER-HUMAN' PHASE,
INTO SOMETHING TOO PRIMAL
FOR THEM TO CONTROL. AND
THOUGH THE STRENGTH AND PAIN
THRESHOLDS ARE WAY BEYOND
WHAT WE'D HOPED FOR... THE
LOSS OF INTELLIGENCE
RENDERED
HIM USELESS.

SO? HOW
DO YOU PLAN TO
PROCEED?

HAVEN'T
DECIDED. YOU
HAVE ANY
SUGGESTIONS?

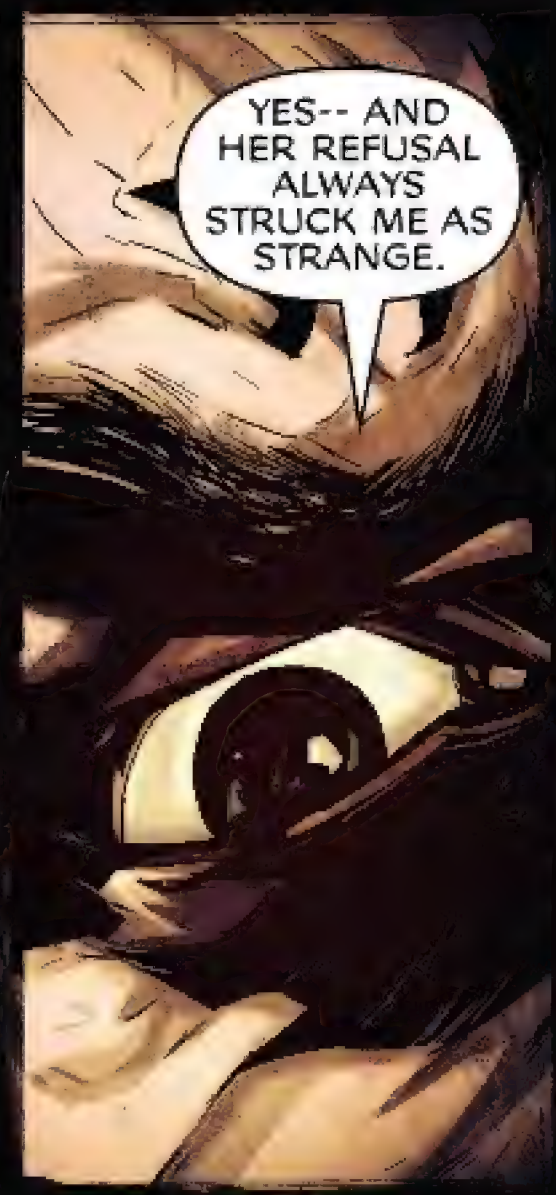


WE NEED
ANOTHER
GENE.

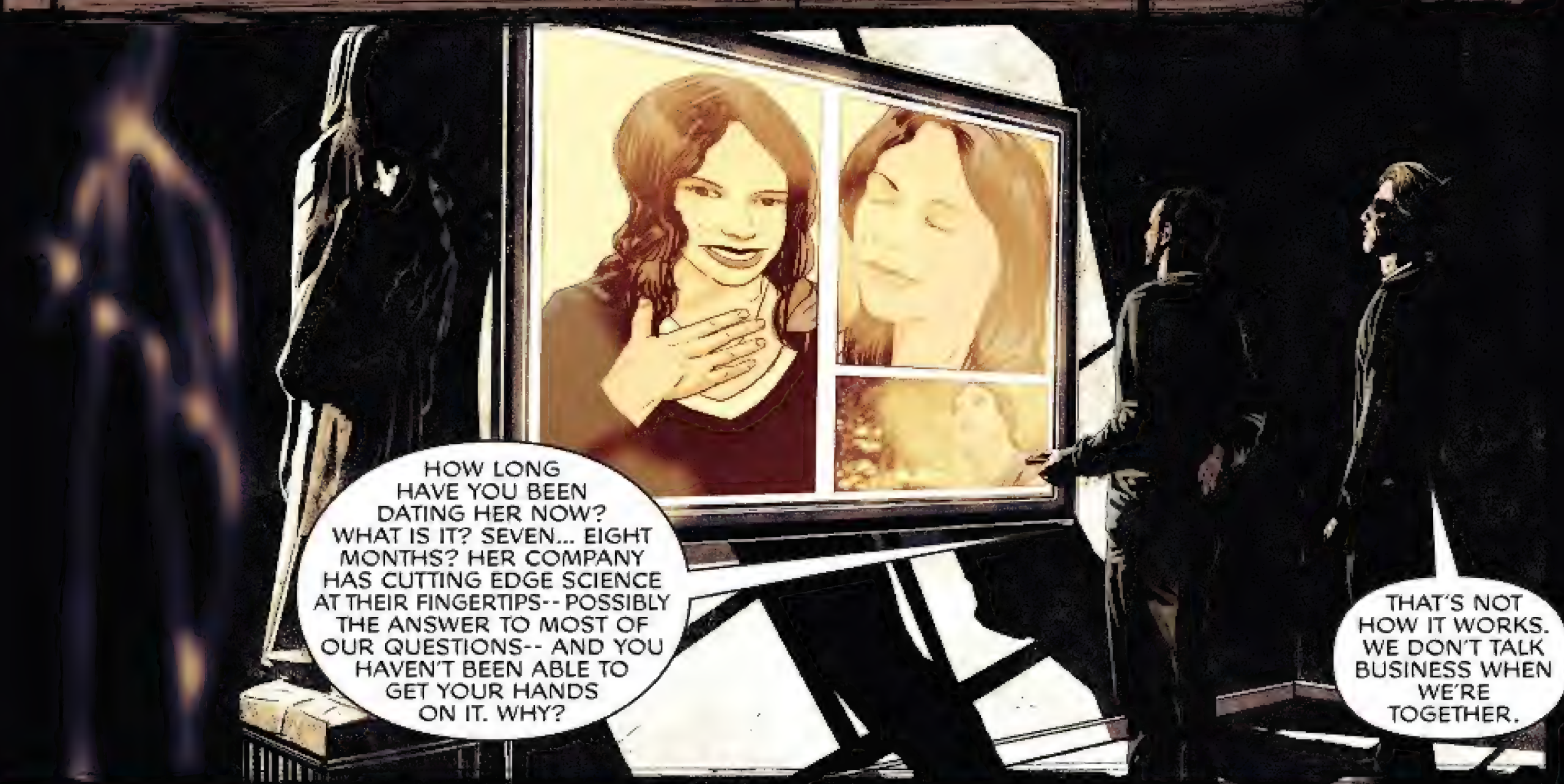
EXACTLY.

AND IF
WE DON'T
WANT TO
LOSE ANY
MORE TIME...
THERE'S
ONLY ONE
PLACE TO
GET IT.

SHE WON'T
SELL IT TO US,
WYNN. YOU KNOW
THAT. YOU'VE
BEEN IN MEETINGS
WITH HER.



YES-- AND
HER REFUSAL
ALWAYS
STRUCK ME AS
STRANGE.

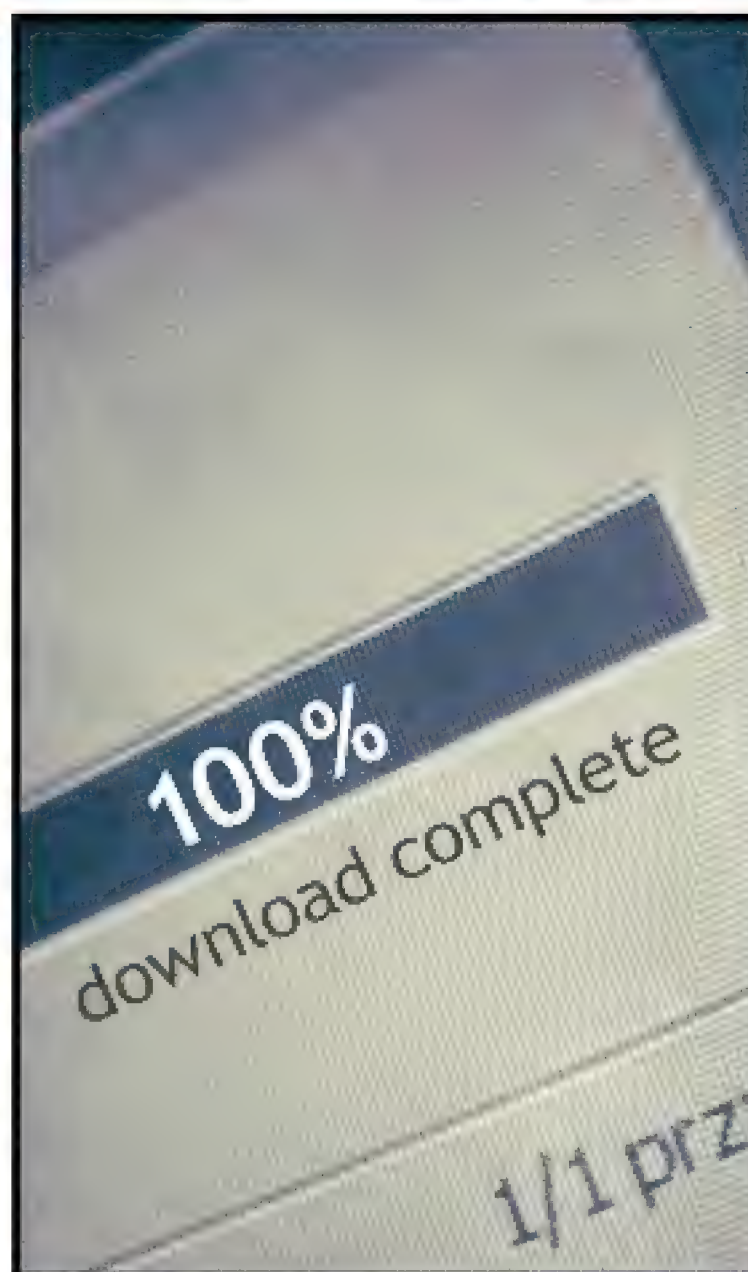
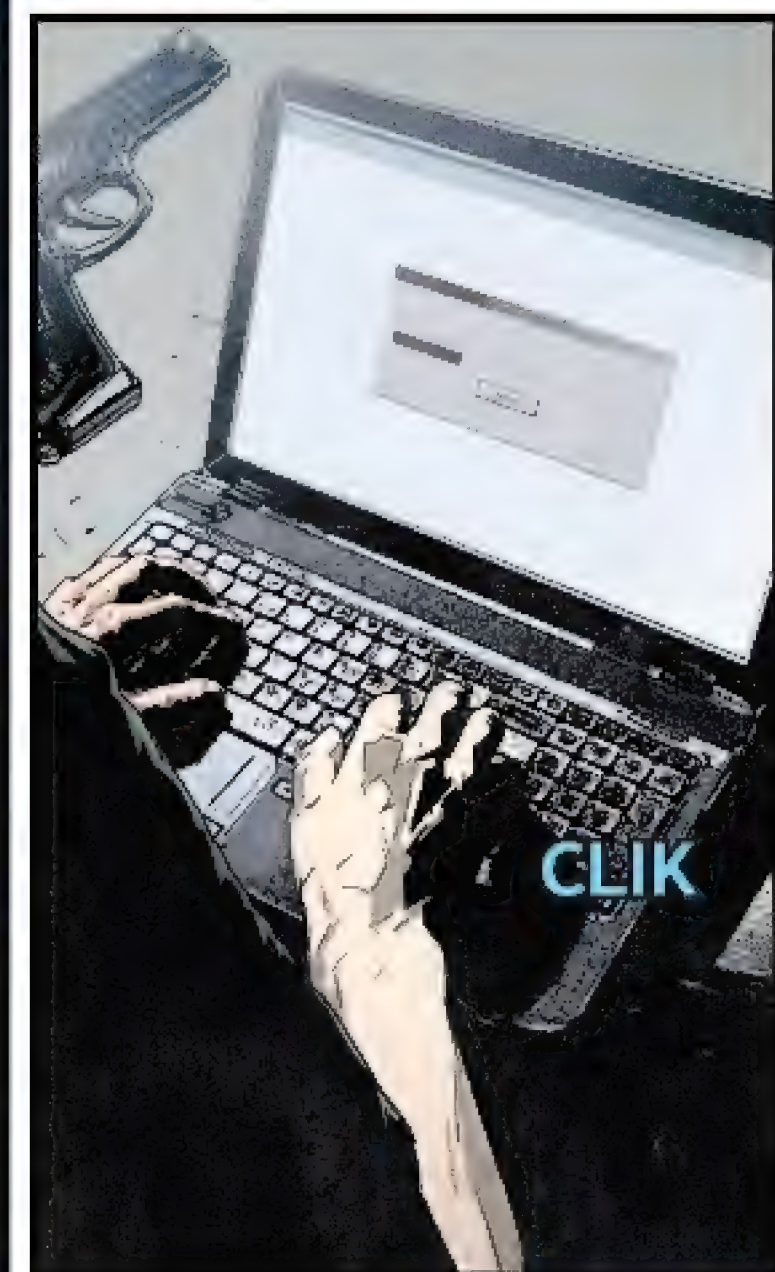


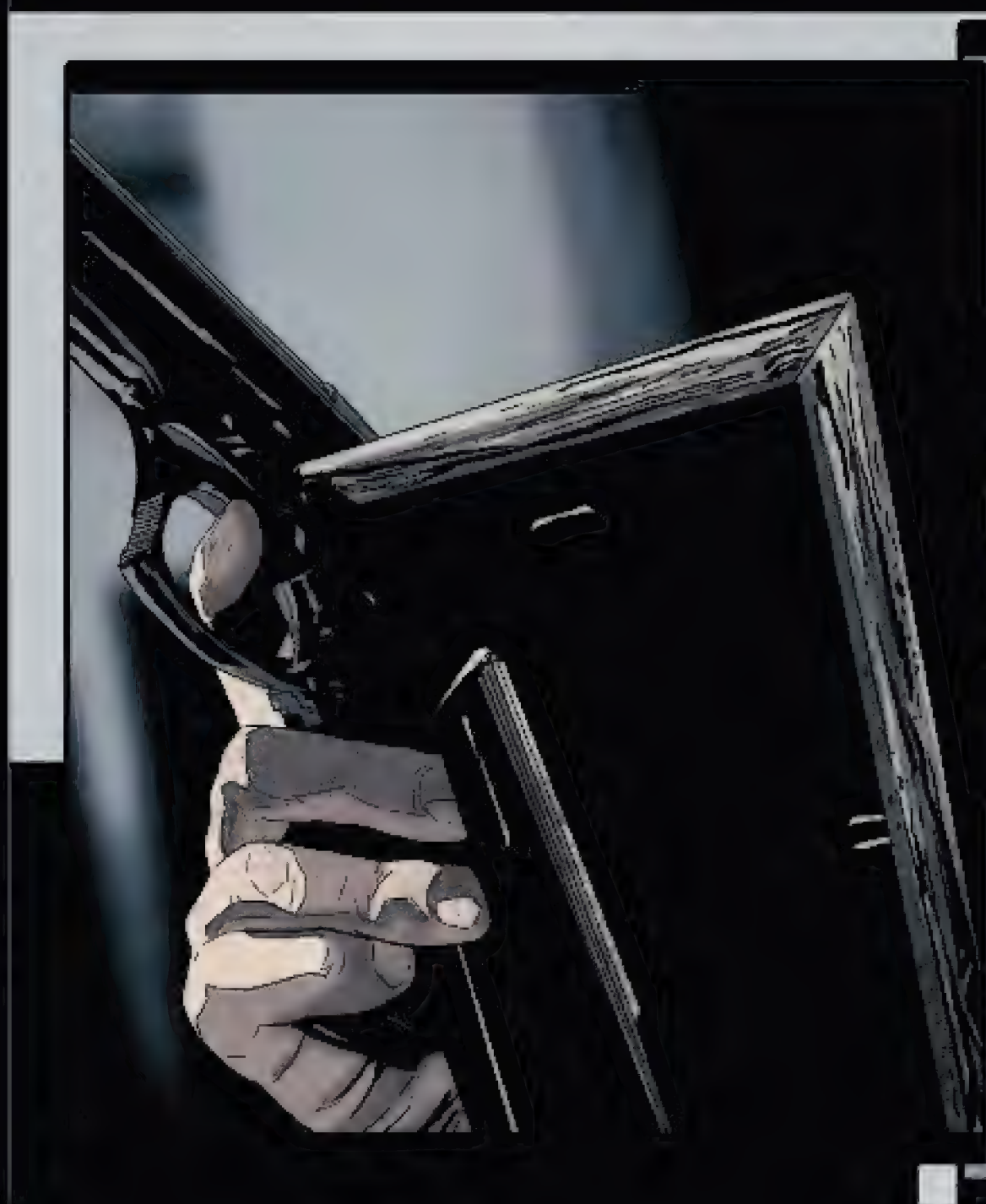
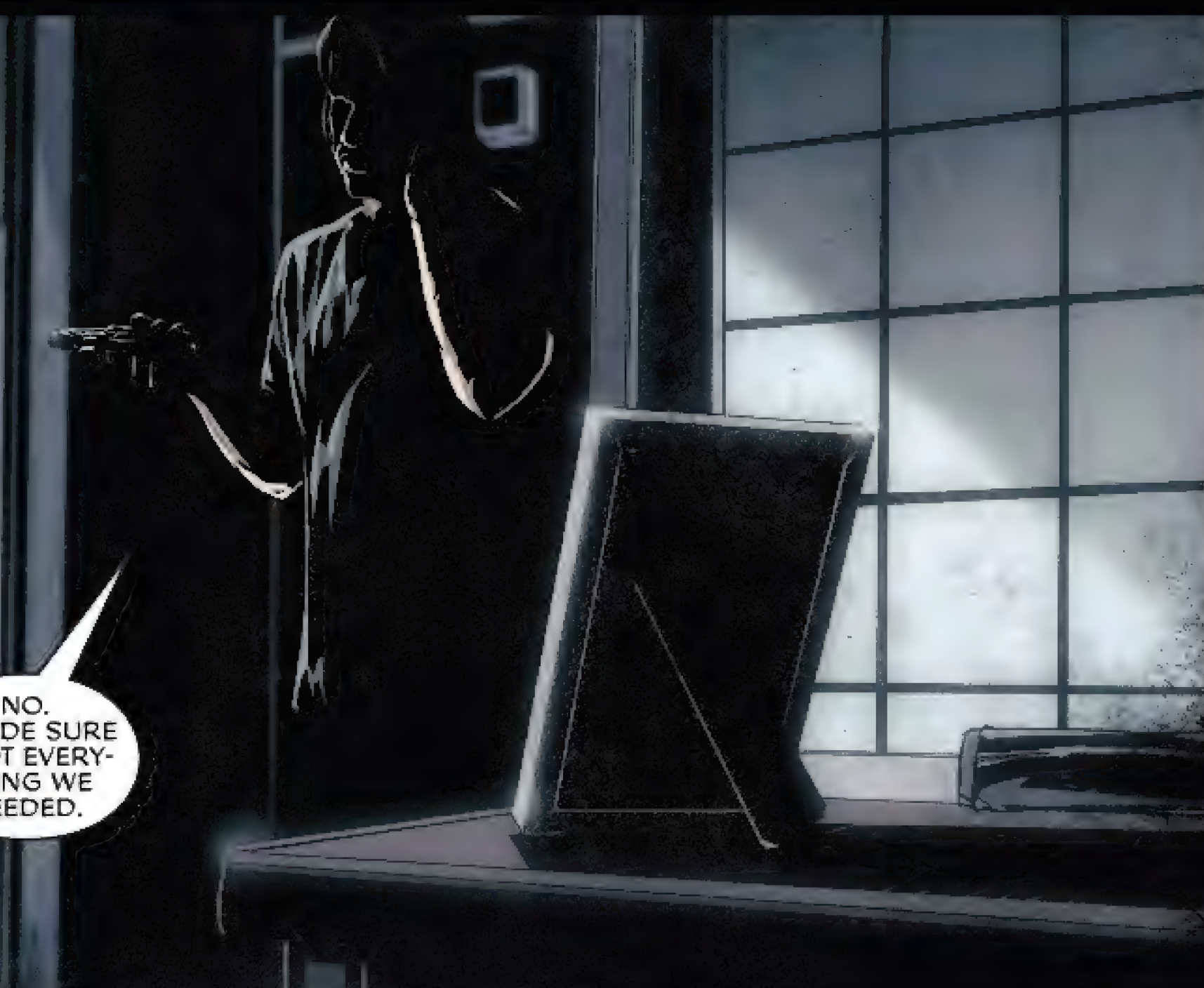
HOW LONG
HAVE YOU BEEN
DATING HER NOW?
WHAT IS IT? SEVEN... EIGHT
MONTHS? HER COMPANY
HAS CUTTING EDGE SCIENCE
AT THEIR FINGERTIPS-- POSSIBLY
THE ANSWER TO MOST OF
OUR QUESTIONS-- AND YOU
HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO
GET YOUR HANDS
ON IT. WHY?

THAT'S NOT
HOW IT WORKS.
WE DON'T TALK
BUSINESS WHEN
WE'RE
TOGETHER.



THEN YOU'RE
GOING TO HAVE TO
DECIDE: WHAT'S MORE
IMPORTANT... PROFESSOR
GEBHARD... OR YOUR
BUSINESS INTERESTS?







CRASHH

SHUNK

KRAKOW

THE
PENTAGON
IS GOING
TO BLOW A
GASKET.

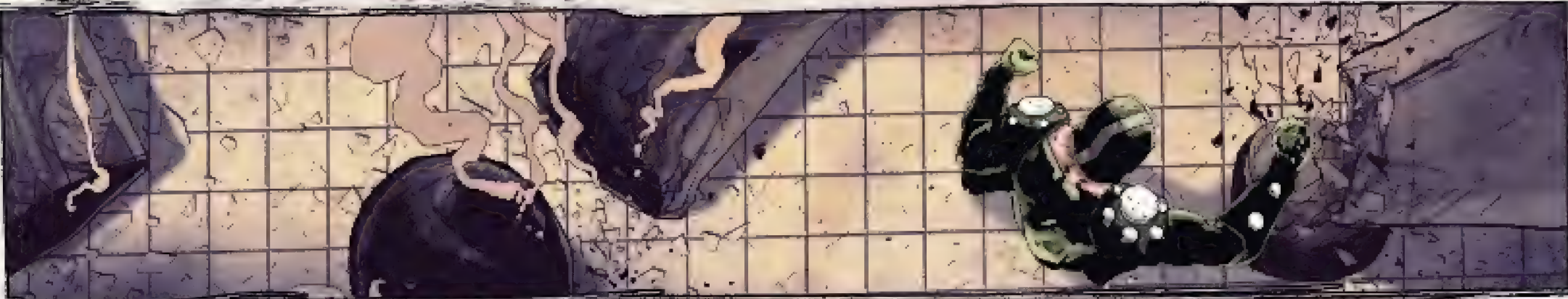
I'M SUPPOSED
TO SHOWCASE
THIS NEW WEAPON TO
THEM-- IN THREE WEEKS!
HOW'S THAT GOING TO
HAPPEN NOW? YOU
BLEW THIS ONE,
KRAMER!

THEY'RE NEVER
GOING TO GIVE US
ANOTHER EXTENSION. NOT
AFTER WE'VE SCREWED
THEM EIGHT TIMES! I TOLD
YOU... THEY'LL SHUT YOUR
ASS DOWN IF YOU
DON'T DELIVER.

I STUCK MY NECK
OUT FOR YOU! AND FOR
WHAT?! FIVE YEARS AND
BILLIONS OF DOLLARS AND
YOU CAN'T DEVELOP ANYTHING
USEFUL FOR US?! HOW
MANY GODDAMN FAILURES
IS THIS NOW?

FORTY-
SIX.

FORTY-
SIX?!?
CHRIST!



THAT'S IT--
YOU'RE DONE!
AS SOON AS THEY
FIND OUT YOU *F**KED*
THEM AGAIN YOU'RE
THROUGH! THERE
WON'T *EVER* BE A
PATIENT FORTY-
SEVEN!

wrong.



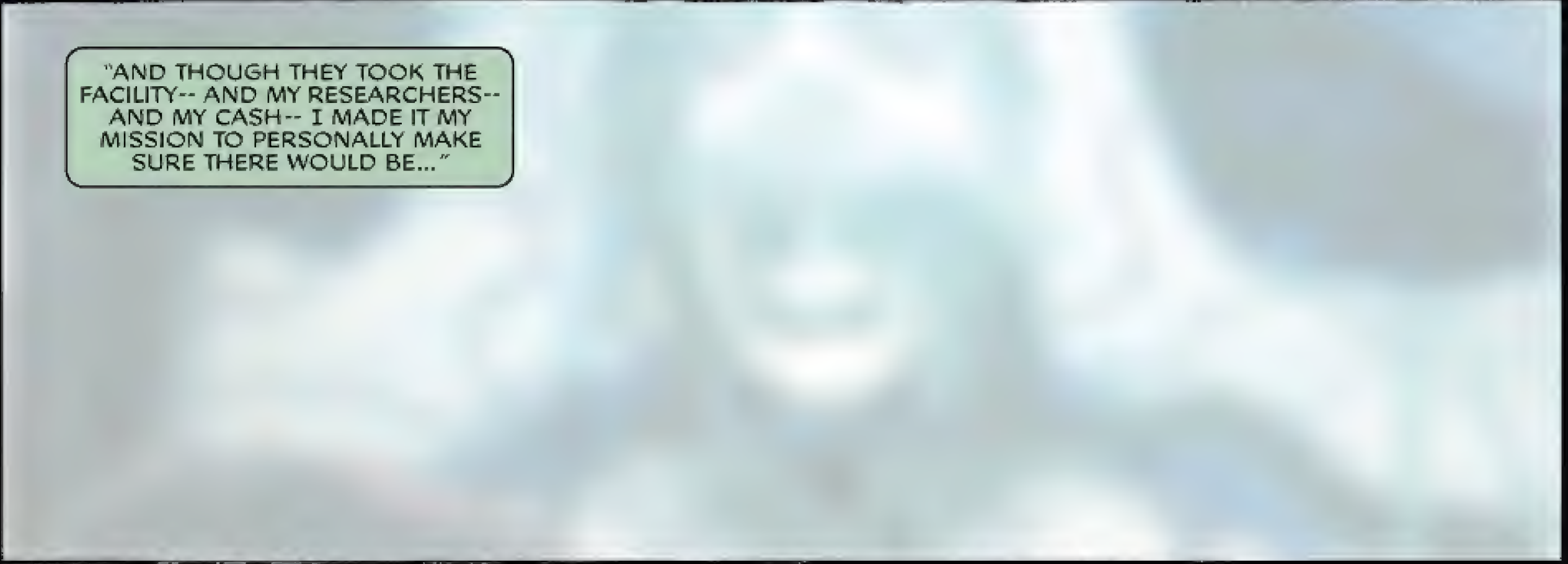
"THEY WERE
WRONG.



"NO WAY WAS I
GOING TO STOP--
NOT WHEN I WAS
SO CLOSE.



"NOT WHEN I
COULD ALMOST
TASTE IT!



"AND THOUGH THEY TOOK THE
FACILITY-- AND MY RESEARCHERS--
AND MY CASH-- I MADE IT MY
MISSION TO PERSONALLY MAKE
SURE THERE WOULD BE..."



"...A PATIENT
47!"



"AND EVERY TIME I THINK ABOUT HIM-- ALL I FEEL IS PAIN. AND SUFFERING."



"BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER."



"I REMEMBER HIM. I CAN FEEL THAT HE'S OUT THERE. I KNOW HE IS."



"SOMEWHERE... PATIENT 47 IS STILL ALIVE!"





KEEP THE CROWD BACK!

THIS AREA NEEDS TO BE KEPT CLEAR!



MAKE SURE...

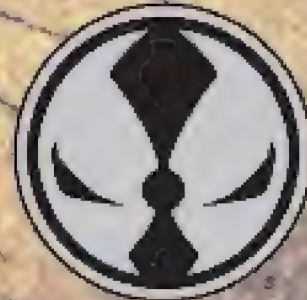
MY GOD!... LOOK!



HE'S UP!



HE'S NOT DEAD!--
HE'S ALIVE!



Next: **THE RESURRECTION**

20TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2012

20

1992-2012

image

217

DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN



Golden
McFARLANE
#100



PLEASE...
TAKE A STEP
BACK! WE CAN'T LET
YOU THROUGH. WHAT WE
NEED YOU TO DO IS GET
OVER TO THE AMBULANCE
AND LET THEM CHECK
YOU OUT.

I TOLD
YOU--
I'M FINE!
I JUST WANT
TO TALK TO
THE GUY.

WE CAN'T
LET YOU DO THAT!
HE'S GOING TO THE
SQUAD CAR AND
YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED
TO INTERACT WITH
THE SUSPECT.

SO WHY
DON'T YOU
JUST RELAX AND
LET THE DOCTORS
TAKE A LOOK
AT YOU?



ICE

I DON'T
WANT A
DOCTOR!

LISTEN,
DOWNING-- YOU
WERE SHOT! WE ALL
SAW IT. I DON'T KNOW
HOW YOU'RE EVEN STANDING
BUT YOU NEED TO SIT DOWN
AND TAKE A DEEP BREATH,
UNTIL WE SORT THIS
OUT.

OKAY! FINE!
I'M DONE WITH
ALL THIS! DO
WHATEVER YOU
HAVE TO.

POLICE





JIM!
HEY, JIM!!
WAIT UP!

JIM!

SORRY, GUY,
NO ONE'S ALLOWED
PAST HERE! YOU
NEED TO GO OUT
THE FRONT...

I'M DOWNING'S
MANAGER. I WAS
IN THE GREEN ROOM
WHEN THE SHOOTING
STARTED. JUST LET
ME...

I SAID NO
ONE PASSES.
THOSE ARE MY
ORDERS.

Unh?...
IT'S OKAY,
OFFICER. HE'S
WITH ME. LET
HIM
THROUGH.

MOMENTS LATER



JESUS CHRIST,
JIM! WHAT HAPPENED
OUT THERE? I
COULDN'T SEE BECAUSE
THE SCREEN WENT
FUZZY. IT LOOKED LIKE
SOMEONE TRIED TO
SHOOT YOU...!

BUT THAT'S
CRAZY! WHY
WOULD SOMEONE
WANT TO DO
THAT? YOU COULD
HAVE BEEN KILLED!
WHAT IF HE HIT
YOU?

HE DID.
TWICE.



WHAT?!

YOU TOOK
TWO
BULLETS?

YES.
BUT I'M
OKAY NOW.
MY BODY...
SOMEHOW IT
HEALED
ITSELF.

I GUESS
MY POWERS
WORK ON
ME, TOO.

I WAS
IN PAIN FOR A
MINUTE THEN--
POOF! IT WAS
GONE.







SLAM



NICE
ENTRANCE--
VERY DRAMATIC
OF YOU.

AND
YOUR SENSE
OF TIMING IS
IMPECCABLE. I WAS
JUST FINISHING UP
MY TALK WITH YOUR
DOG FRIEND HERE.
HE WAS INTERESTED
IN KNOWING MY
THOUGHTS ON
THE TOPIC OF
'LOYALTY.'



BUT, AS YOU
CAN SEE-- IT WAS A
BIT OF A ONE-SIDED
CONVERSATION.



EXCUSE
ME! OUT OF
MY WAY...
PLEASE!

TWITCH!

WERE YOU
WATCHING? DID
YOU SEE?! THEY
SAID HE GOT SHOT
AND NOW HE'S
WALKING AROUND
LIKE...

NEW YORK POLICE DEPARTMENT · PRECINCT 23

QUIET!

I SAW IT--
NOW LET ME
HEAR WHAT
THEY'RE
SAYING!

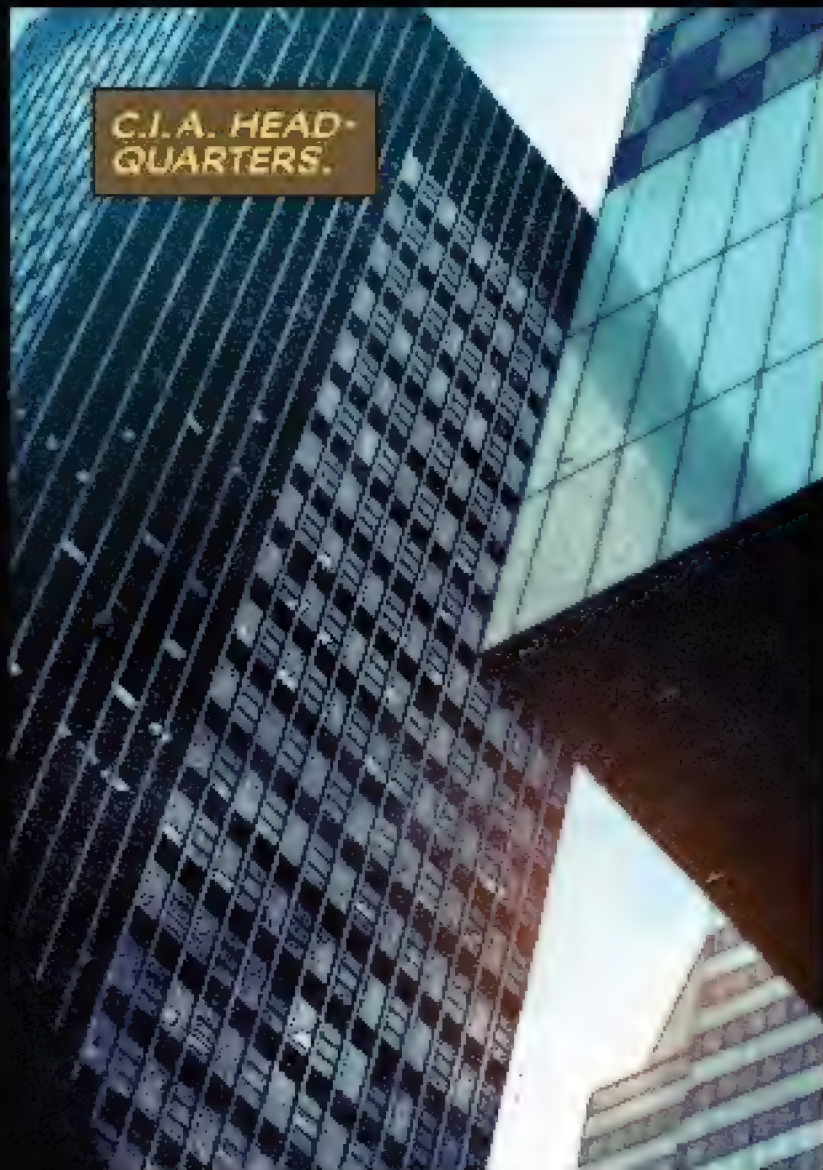
HE JUST
LAID THERE.
I COULDN'T TELL IF HE
WAS MOVING OR NOT,
THE CROWD AND THE
POLICE WERE BLOCKING
MY VIEW. BUT THEN...
I COULDN'T BELIEVE
MY EYES... HE JUST
GOT UP.

HE HAD
BLOOD ALL
OVER HIM AND
THEN THE POLICE
PUSHED US AWAY.
PEOPLE WERE
SCREAMING...

TWITCH,
WE NEED TO
GET DOWN
THERE!

NO.

I KNOW DOWNING--
HE'LL BE GONE BY THE
TIME WE GET THERE. WE'D
BE WASTING OUR TIME.
BESIDES, TRYING TO FIGURE
THIS MESS OUT IS GIVING
ME A HEADACHE.



C.I.A. HEAD-
QUARTERS.



I HOPE YOU'VE
GOT YOUR BOYS ALL
OVER THIS DOWNING
FIASCO! WE NEED TO
CONTAIN THIS! EVERY
NEWS ORGANIZATION
IN THE WORLD'S
COVERING IT!

WE'RE
ON IT.

I BET IT
WAS ONE OF
OUR MIDDLE
EAST FRIENDS
TRYING TO
SCREW US.

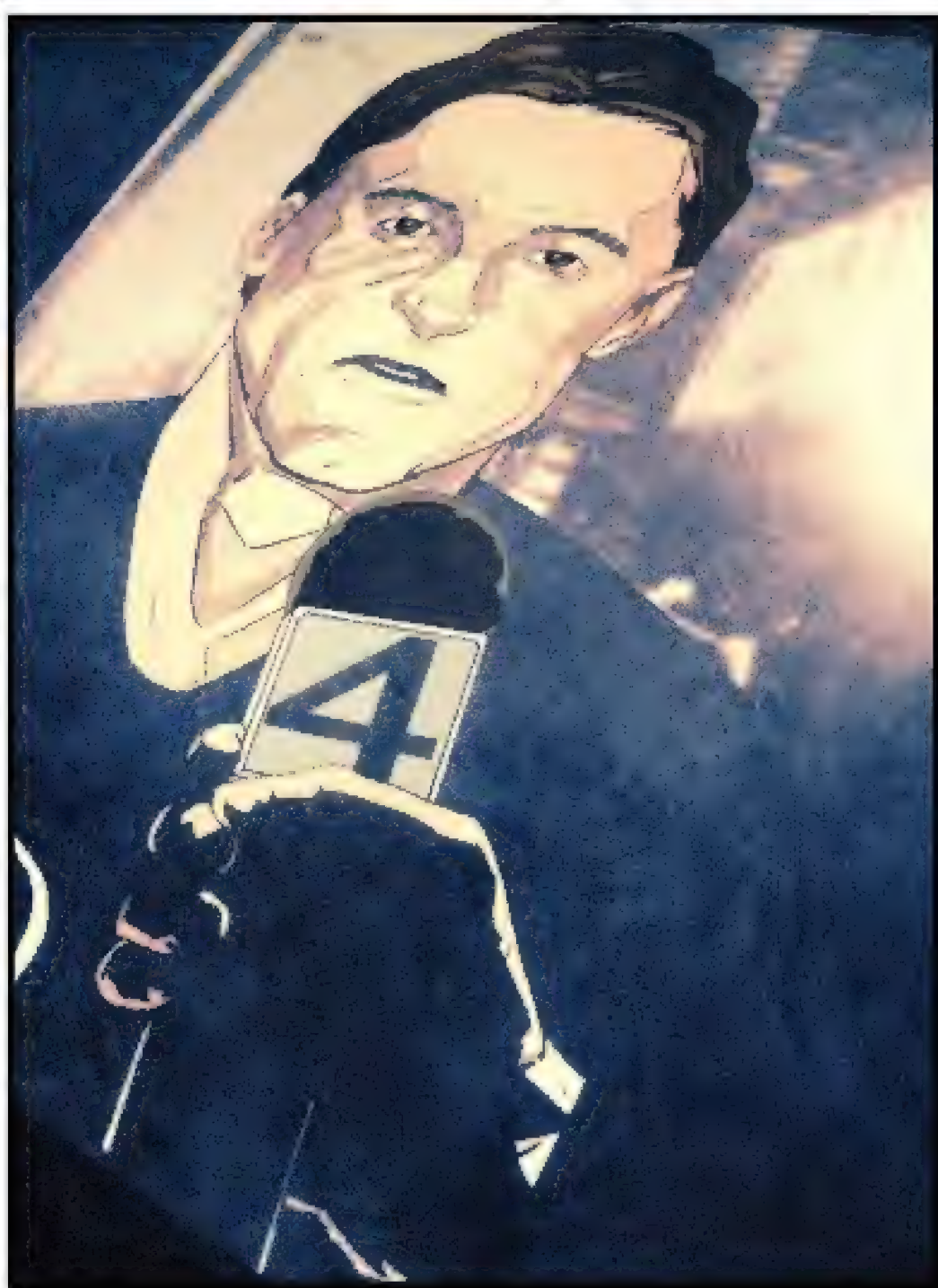
WE
DON'T
THINK
SO.

...THERE WAS
A LOUD SOUND,
THEN THE PLATE GLASS
EXPLODED! I HEARD...
I THINK ABOUT
THREE SHOTS...

... I CAN'T BE
SURE WITH ALL THE
TRAFFIC NOISE BEHIND
US. BUT THE GUY WHO DID
IT WAS ONLY ABOUT TEN
FEET FROM US... WE DIDN'T
KNOW... THEN WE SAW HIS
GUN. THAT'S WHEN WE
TRIED TO GET OUT OF
THERE...



THEN FIND OUT
WHICH DIPLOMATIC
SLEAZEBALL **BETRAYED**
US! THIS COULD CRIPPLE
YOUR SET-UP WITH THAT
REPORTER-- THE ROSEN
KID. HE STILL HASN'T
GIVEN YOU HIS TRUST
YET, HAS HE?



HE'S STILL
ON THE FENCE,
BUT HE'LL COME
AROUND.
STRANGELY... THIS
SHOOTING MIGHT BE
THE CATALYST
THAT HOOKS HIM
FOR US.

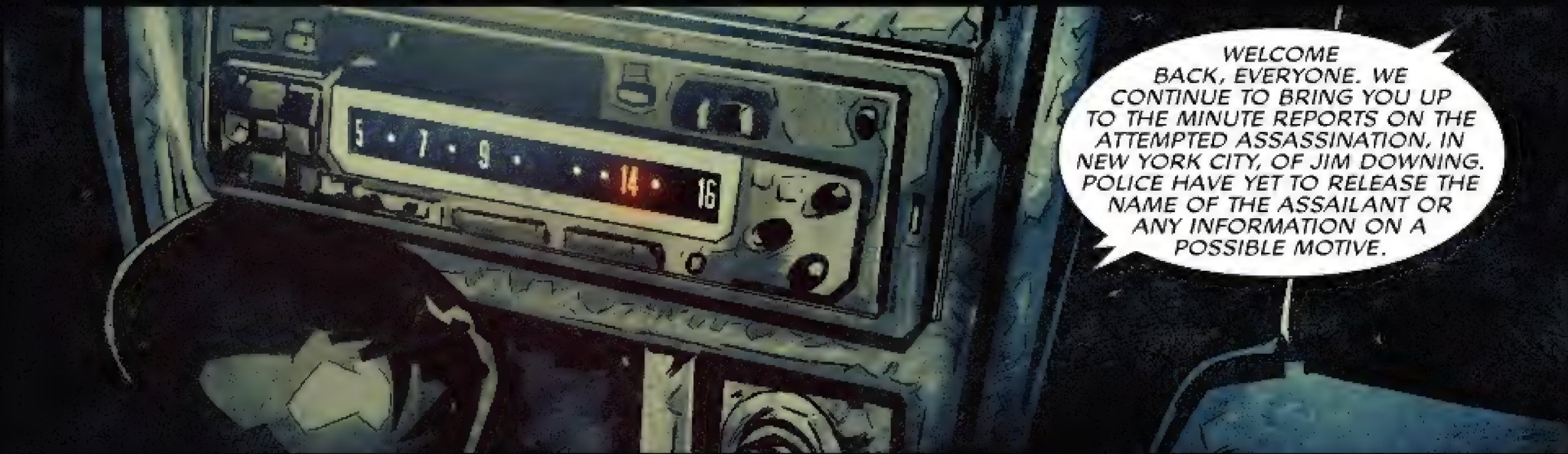
AN OHIO HIGHWAY.



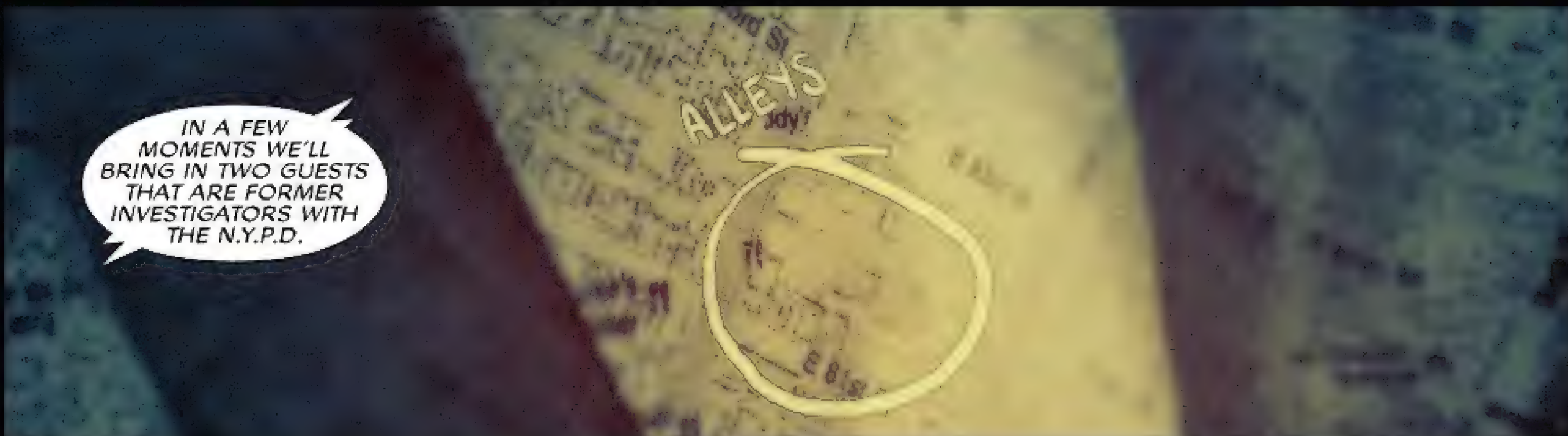
WE CAN CONSOLIDATE YOUR DEBT AND WORK WITH YOUR CREDITORS TO HELP CREATE A MONTHLY PAYMENT THAT IS MANAGEABLE-- SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?



CALL NOW AND ONE OF OUR REPRESENTATIVES WILL WALK YOU THROUGH OUR EASY THREE-STEP PROGRAM TO A MORE SECURE AND STRESS-FREE LIFE.



WELCOME BACK, EVERYONE. WE CONTINUE TO BRING YOU UP TO THE MINUTE REPORTS ON THE ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION, IN NEW YORK CITY, OF JIM DOWNING. POLICE HAVE YET TO RELEASE THE NAME OF THE ASSAILANT OR ANY INFORMATION ON A POSSIBLE MOTIVE.



IN A FEW MOMENTS WE'LL BRING IN TWO GUESTS THAT ARE FORMER INVESTIGATORS WITH THE N.Y.P.D.





WE DON'T HAVE THE STAFF TO COVER FOR YOU, SO I'M SORRY YOU'LL HAVE TO STAY FOR THE REST OF YOUR SHIFT.

I TOLD YOU I NEED TO LEAVE! AN EMERGENCY HAS COME UP!

I UNDERSTAND, BUT WE'RE SHORT TODAY, AND I CAN'T MAKE ANY EXCEPTIONS BECAUSE...

THEN I QUIT!

I DON'T NEED A JOB LIKE THIS! ALL YOUR DUMB RULES!! AND *THESE* HATS YOU MAKE US WEAR?! WE'RE NOT LIVING IN THE FIFTIES ANYMORE-- WHEN ARE YOU GUYS GOING WAKE UP?!



THE TARGET IS LEAVING THE BUILDING.

TELL THE VATICAN THAT OUR OPERATION WITH MISS JOHNSTON IS GOING ACCORDING TO PLAN.



THIRTY-SIX YEARS I'VE BEEN AT THIS. THIRTY-SIX!



AND IN ALL THAT TIME I AIN'T EVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS.



BUT IF YOU INSIST YOU'RE NOT IN PAIN, I CAN'T KEEP YOU AGAINST YOUR WILL. YOU'RE FREE TO GO IF YOU WANT.

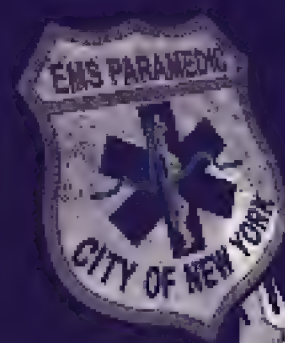


FINALLY! WE'RE IN AGREEMENT ON SOMETHING. I APPRECIATE YOU DOING YOUR JOB, BUT YOU CAN WRITE IN YOUR REPORT THAT YOU DID YOUR TESTS AND NOTHING WAS WRONG.



THAT'S WHAT'S GOT MY HEAD SPINNING. TWO DIRECT HITS TO YOUR CHEST AND HEART AREA, AND THE WORST I FIND IS A COUPLE WELTS.

IT DEFIES LOGIC.



YEAH?... WELL, WELCOME TO MY WORLD.

C'MON JIM, LET'S GO. THEY NEED US UPSTAIRS TO FINALIZE A COUPLE THINGS BEFORE WE LEAVE.





ARE THESE THE DOORS TO GET INTO THE BUILDING?

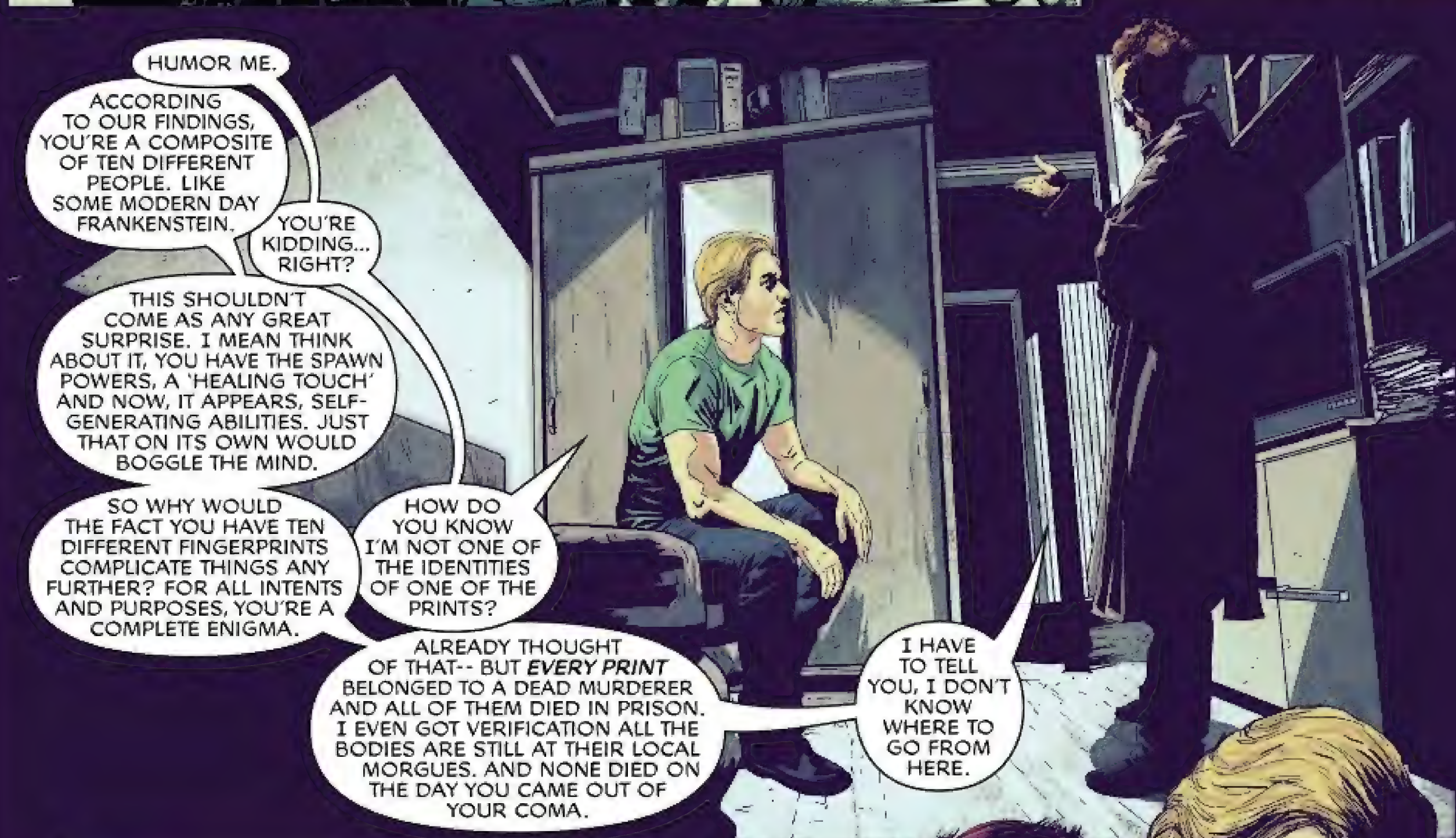
YEAH. THE COPS AREN'T LETTING ANYONE THROUGH THE FRONT.

I WAS SURPRISED WHEN YOU CALLED ME. I THOUGHT YOU'D HAVE BEEN LONG GONE BY NOW.

I'M DONE RUNNING.

SO?... YOU SAID MY PRINTS CAME BACK?

THEY DID-- YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LIKE THE RESULTS.



HUMOR ME.

ACCORDING TO OUR FINDINGS, YOU'RE A COMPOSITE OF TEN DIFFERENT PEOPLE. LIKE SOME MODERN DAY FRANKENSTEIN.

YOU'RE KIDDING... RIGHT?

THIS SHOULDN'T COME AS ANY GREAT SURPRISE. I MEAN THINK ABOUT IT, YOU HAVE THE SPAWN POWERS, A 'HEALING TOUCH' AND NOW, IT APPEARS, SELF-GENERATING ABILITIES. JUST THAT ON ITS OWN WOULD BOGGLE THE MIND.

SO WHY WOULD THE FACT YOU HAVE TEN DIFFERENT FINGERPRINTS COMPLICATE THINGS ANY FURTHER? FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, YOU'RE A COMPLETE ENIGMA.

HOW DO YOU KNOW I'M NOT ONE OF THE IDENTITIES OF ONE OF THE PRINTS?

ALREADY THOUGHT OF THAT-- BUT **EVERY PRINT** BELONGED TO A DEAD MURDERER AND ALL OF THEM DIED IN PRISON. I EVEN GOT VERIFICATION ALL THE BODIES ARE STILL AT THEIR LOCAL MORGUES. AND NONE DIED ON THE DAY YOU CAME OUT OF YOUR COMA.

I HAVE TO TELL YOU, I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO GO FROM HERE.



JIM...!

OH MY **GOD!** YOU'RE OKAY! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT-- I WAS SO AFRAID!



I... I'M SORRY...
I DIDN'T MEAN TO
INTERRUPT YOUR
CONVERSATION.

IT'S FINE. WE
WERE JUST FINISHING UP.
I'LL CALL YOU LATER,
TWITCH. I HAVE A COUPLE
OTHER IDEAS.

I'LL BE AT
THE
PRECINCT.



YOU'RE
SURE
YOU'RE
OKAY?

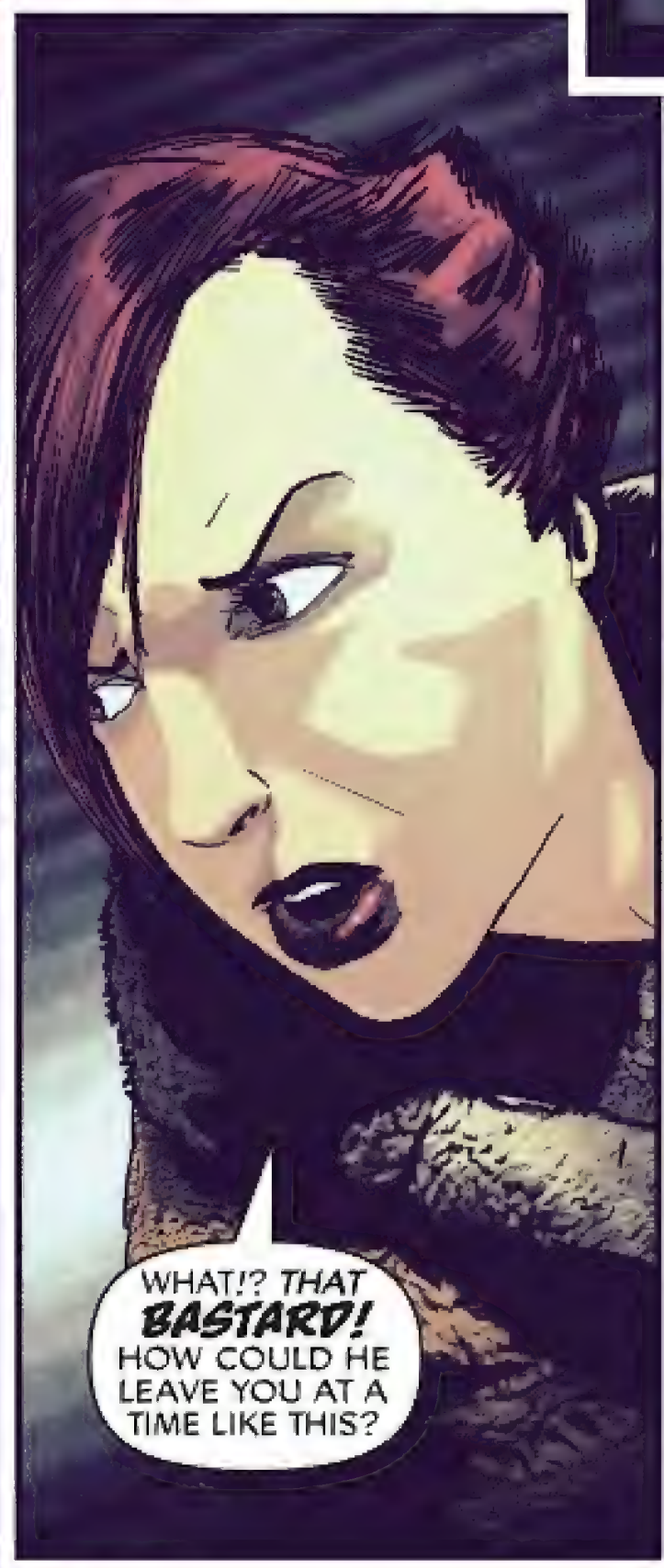


I THINK SO.
THE MEDICS
AREN'T SAYING
OTHERWISE.

EVERYONE'S
TALKING ABOUT YOU!
YOU KNOW THAT, DON'T
YOU? ALL THE NEWS CHANNELS.
THE INTERNET. **EVERYONE**. IT'S
NOT JUST YOUR HEALING--
NOW THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT
YOUR 'RESURRECTION.'
THEY THINK YOU'RE...
A **GOD**.

MARC
SHOULD
HAVE TOLD
YOU.

HE
PROBABLY
TRIED, BUT
HE WENT TO
THE ROOF
TO MAKE A
CALL.



WHAT!? THAT
BASTARD!
HOW COULD HE
LEAVE YOU AT A
TIME LIKE THIS?



I JUST WANT
TO KNOW-- WHY
DIDN'T YOU STOP THIS?
YOU SAID YOU COULD
PROTECT US.



THAT
DIDN'T WORK
TOO WELL
FOR YOU, DID
IT?



THE SHOOTER... HE WASN'T A PART OF THIS. HE'S A ROGUE. NO ONE KNOWS WHO HE IS, BUT I'VE GOT HALF A DOZEN PEOPLE ON IT. I'LL GET YOU SOME ANSWERS SOON. IN THE MEANTIME, YOU NEED TO TAKE JIM HOME WITH YOU AND STAY THERE. MY PEOPLE WILL FOLLOW YOU TO MAKE SURE NO ONE HASSLES YOU.

THAT INCLUDES THE MEDIA AND THE AUTHORITIES. WE'LL MAKE SURE ANYONE WHO NEEDS TO GET TO YOU HAS BEEN FULLY CHECKED OUT. CHAOTIC SHIT LIKE THIS MAKES PEOPLE TAKE THEIR EYES OFF THE REAL GAME.



ALL RIGHT, BUT THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE.



I CAN'T LOSE YOU.

I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

I... NEED... YOU.



NO!

WE'RE NOT GOING TO DO THIS! I'VE ALREADY TOLD YOU THAT... I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN AND LETTING ME STAY WITH YOU AND MARC, BUT I'M NOT GOING TO BETRAY THAT FRIENDSHIP.



IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT, ISN'T IT?

WHAT'S WRONG, I'M NOT YOUR TYPE? NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU? MAYBE I SHOULD BECOME A NURSE-- LIKE SARA! SEEMS LIKE YOU'RE WILLING TO F**K HER ALL YOU WANT, BUT YOU WON'T F**K ME ANYMORE!!



WHOA...!
EASY NOW!

THIS HAS
NOTHING TO DO
WITH SARA. I'M
JUST NOT READY
TO...

BULLSHIT!
THIS HAS EVERY-
THING TO DO WITH
HER! YOU'RE JUST
THE LAST ONE TO
REALIZE IT!

BUT THIS
ISN'T
OVER!



NOT BY
A LONG
SHOT!



SLAM



GUESS I
MIGHT AS
WELL SEE WHAT
OTHERS ARE
SAYING...

...AN OFFICIAL
STATEMENT FROM
THE VATICAN IS CALLING
FOR CAUTION IN LIGHT
OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES
SURROUNDING
MR. DOWNING. THE
RELEASE STATES:

"WHILE
THE WORLD HAS
BORNE WITNESS TO
THE MIRACLES PERFORMED
BY AN INDIVIDUAL OF
PARTICULAR INTEREST, WE
MUST BE SURE TO ASCERTAIN
THE VALIDITY OF THESE ACTS
BEFORE OUR GRANDEST
HOPES CAN BE
PROVEN TRUE."



BY ALL ACCOUNTS-- FROM EYEWITNESSES, TO THE DETAILS PROVIDED BY THE MEDICAL STAFF WHO EXAMINED MR. DOWNING ON-SCENE AND THE ARRESTING OFFICERS WHO APPREHENDED THE ATTACKER-- THIS WAS NO HOAX. MR. DOWNING WAS INDEED SHOT WITH LIVE ROUNDS. AND HIS WOUNDS APPEARED TO BE VERY REAL BEFORE HIS 'MIRACULOUS' RECOVERY.

THIS EVENT-- THE ATTACK ON HIS LIFE AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, MR. DOWNING'S SUBSEQUENT RECOVERY-- HAS ONLY SERVED TO FURTHER IGNITE A FIRESTORM OF MEDIA AND PUBLIC INTEREST WHICH WAS ALREADY SURGING AS A RESULT OF HIS OTHER RECENT ACTIVITIES.



THE MYSTERIOUS *JIM DOWNING* HAS DONE IT AGAIN, FOLKS. FIRST HE COMES OUT OF NOWHERE WITH A STORY *SO INTRIGUING* WE COULDN'T LOOK AWAY-- A COMA PATIENT WAKES WITH NO *MEMORY* AND NO ONE WHO *REMEMBERS* HIM, THEN STRUTS AROUND TOWN WITH THE POWERS OF A *HEALING ANGEL* AND THE DISHEVELED GOOD LOOKS OF AN *UNDERWEAR MODEL*.

NOW, JUST AS HE PROMISED TO USE HIS GIFTS FOR THE *GOOD OF ALL MANKIND*, A HORRIFIC BURST OF VIOLENT *AGGRESSION* STRIKES HIM DOWN. WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN A TRAGEDY, THOUGH, INSTEAD BECAME AN OPPORTUNITY FOR OUR NEW- FOUND HERO TO INSPIRE HOPE IN US ALL *ONCE AGAIN!*

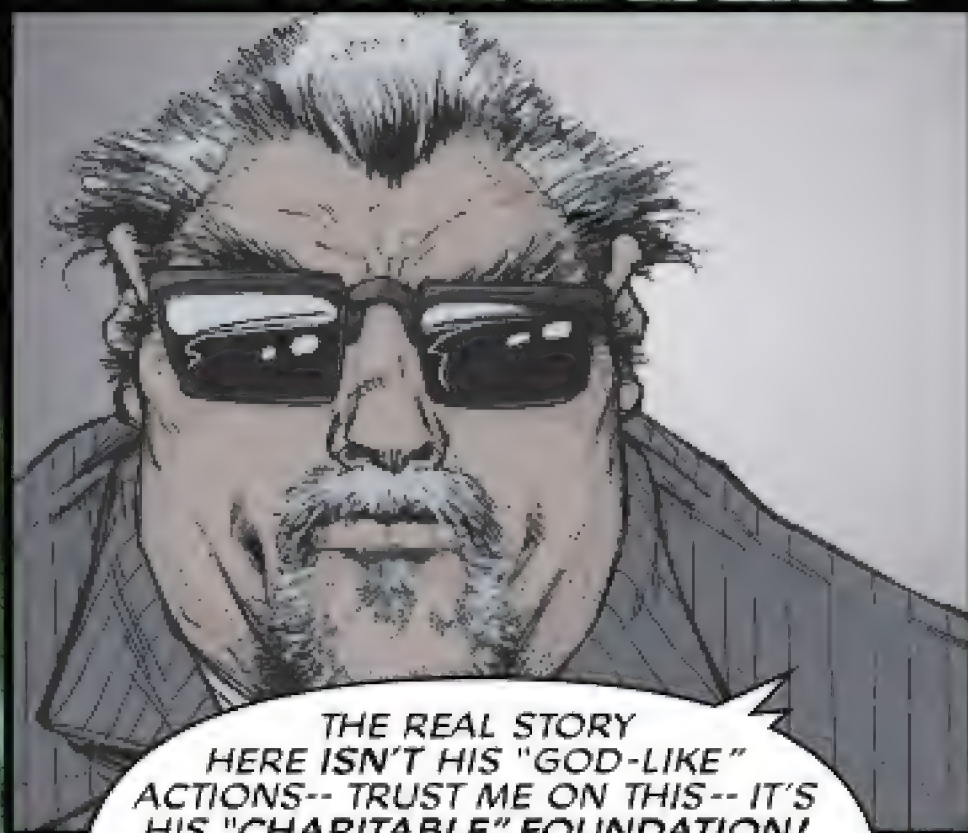
WE ARE WITNESSING A *MIRACLE*, PEOPLE. I HOPE YOU'RE ENJOYING IT WHILE YOU CAN-- I KNOW I AM-- BECAUSE WE MAY NEVER SEE SOMETHING LIKE HIM AGAIN IN OUR LIFETIMES. HIS PRESENCE HAS GRIPPED, NOT ONLY US HERE IN AMERICA, BUT THE ENTIRE WORLD TOO. THE WAVE OF "JIM-SANITY" IS WASHING OVER ALL OF US.



VIOLENCE FOLLOWS THIS MAN EVERYWHERE HE GOES. *WHY IS THAT?* IS HE JUST AN *INNOCENT VICTIM*-- A LOST SOUL WITH *INCREDIBLE* GIFTS HOUNDED BY THE MEDIA AND IMPOSSIBLE *EXPECTATIONS*? OR... IS HE HIS OWN *WORST ENEMY*? *FLAUNTING* HIS *GOOD LOOKS*. *PLAYING CAT AND MOUSE* WITH THE *PRESS*-- ONE DAY HE'S TRYING TO AVOID OUR RIGHTS AS *JOURNALISTS* TO KNOW AND REPORT *THE TRUTH*, THE NEXT HE'S HOLDING *PRESS* CONFERENCES... *DESPERATELY* SEEKING OUR *ATTENTION*-- THE *WORLD'S ATTENTION*-- FOR WHATEVER HIS NEXT GOAL MAY BE.

AND TODAY, WHAT DID WE GET? *ANOTHER* TELEVISED MIRACLE? *ANOTHER* SHOW FOR OUR EYES AND SENSES? *I DOUBT IT!* MR. DOWNING'S "MAGIC" POWERS ARE, IF YOU ASK *ME*, MORE LIKE THE "MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN" FROM WIZARD OF OZ-- *ALL HYPE* AND *NO SUBSTANCE*-- A *DOG AND PONY SHOW* PULLING THE WOOL OVER THE LAME STREAM MEDIA'S EYES WITH FLASH AND *SHOCK* VALUE. BUT NOT *MINE*. *I'M* TELLING YOU *I* SEE THROUGH THIS GUY AND HIS MANIPULATIONS.

I'M NOT BUYING IT!



THE REAL STORY
HERE ISN'T HIS "GOD-LIKE"
ACTIONS-- TRUST ME ON THIS-- IT'S
HIS "CHARITABLE" FOUNDATION!
WHO'S SUPPLYING THE FUNDING FOR
THAT SHAM? DOWNING DIDN'T START
IT FOR FREE, SO **WHERE'D HE GET
THE CASH?** WHO'S PULLING HIS
STRINGS? THAT'S THE **REAL**
QUESTION.

THUDD



Unh...?

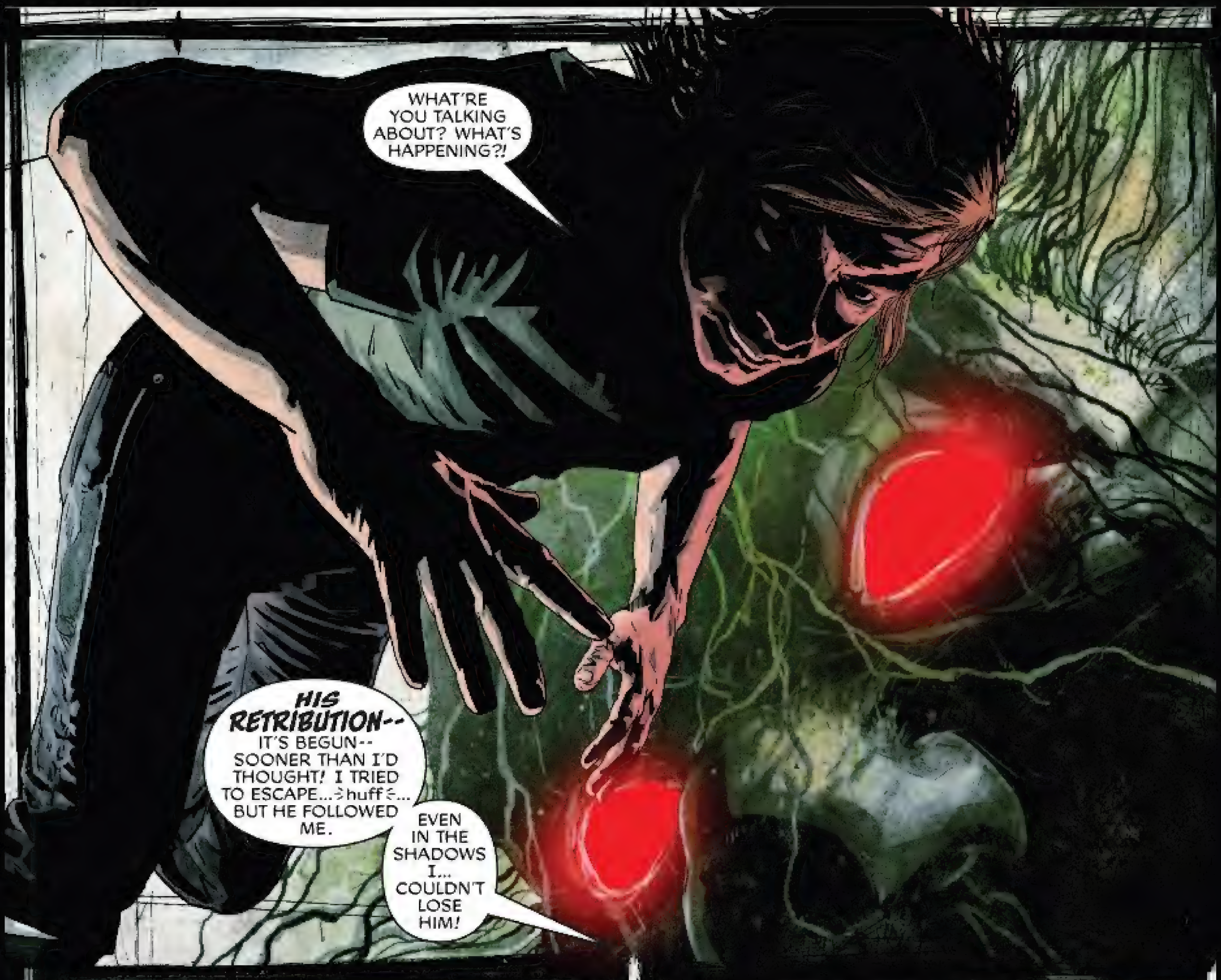


CLOWN--
WHAT THE
HELL?



IT'S
HAPPENING.

JUST
LIKE I SAID...
=>huff<=...



WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHAT'S HAPPENING?!

HIS RETRIBUTION--
IT'S BEGUN--
SOONER THAN I'D THOUGHT! I TRIED TO ESCAPE...^{huff}... BUT HE FOLLOWED ME.

EVEN IN THE SHADOWS I... COULDN'T LOSE HIM!



LOSE WHO?

MALEBOLGIA!

HE FOLLOWED ME! BUT WE'RE--
NOT READY!

IT'S TOO SOON... IT'S WAY... TOO... SOON.



LOOK, I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON WITH YOU, BUT YOU NEED TO RELAX-- NO ONE'S HERE. IT'S JUST YOU AND I.

SADLY,
DOWNING...

THAT
ISN'T
TRUE!

NEXT ISSUE:
**MY
MAKER...
MY
MASTER!**



20TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2012

20

1992-2012

image

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DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN



Golden
M'FARLANE



YOU
GOING TO
JUST STAND
THERE STARING
ME DOWN?

YOU DON'T
REALLY BELIEVE YOU
HAVE A CHANCE
AGAINST ME, DO YOU?
I DIDN'T THINK I MADE
YOU SPAWN'S *THAT*
STUPID.

YOU
DIDN'T
MAKE
ME.

THAT'S YOUR
FIRST MISTAKE.
SO, IF YOU HAVE
SOMETHING YOU
WANT TO GET OFF
YOUR CHEST-- I'M
RIGHT HERE.

OTHERWISE
GET THE HELL OUT
OF MY FACE!



DO
NOT...
**TEMPT
ME!**



I'LL
DO MORE
THAN THAT.



SEE, YOU'RE
NOT THE ONLY
ONE HERE WITH
POWERS.



LET IT GO!!
GODAMMIT,
LET IT GO!

YOU DON'T WANT
THIS FIGHT, JIM --
NOT LIKE THIS! **NOT HERE!**
YOU'LL TAKE OUT THIS
BUILDING AND HALF THE
NEIGHBORHOOD!



YOU'LL KILL
MARC AND
SUSAN!

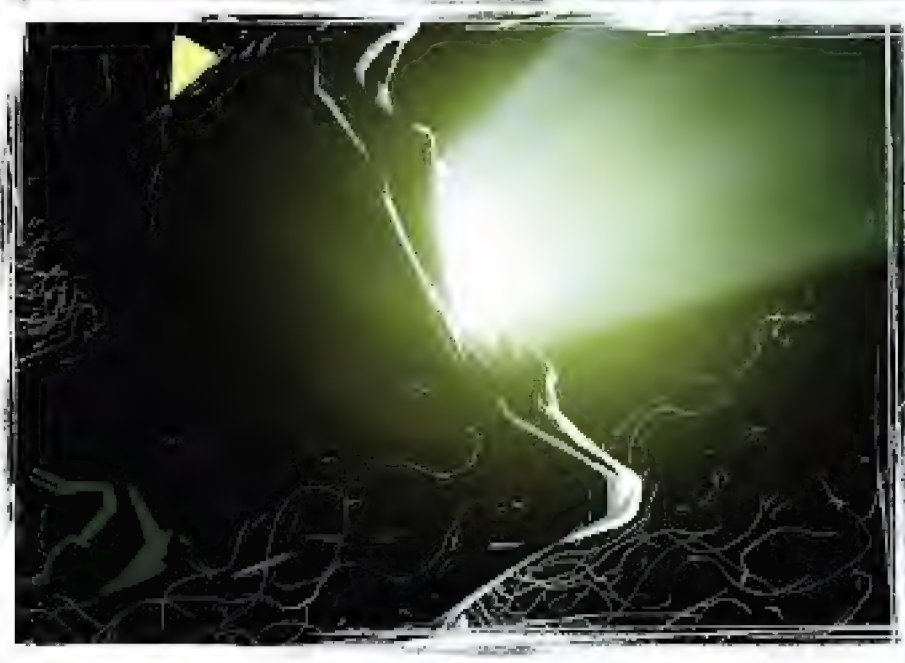
I'LL
LET FREAK
DECIDE
THAT.

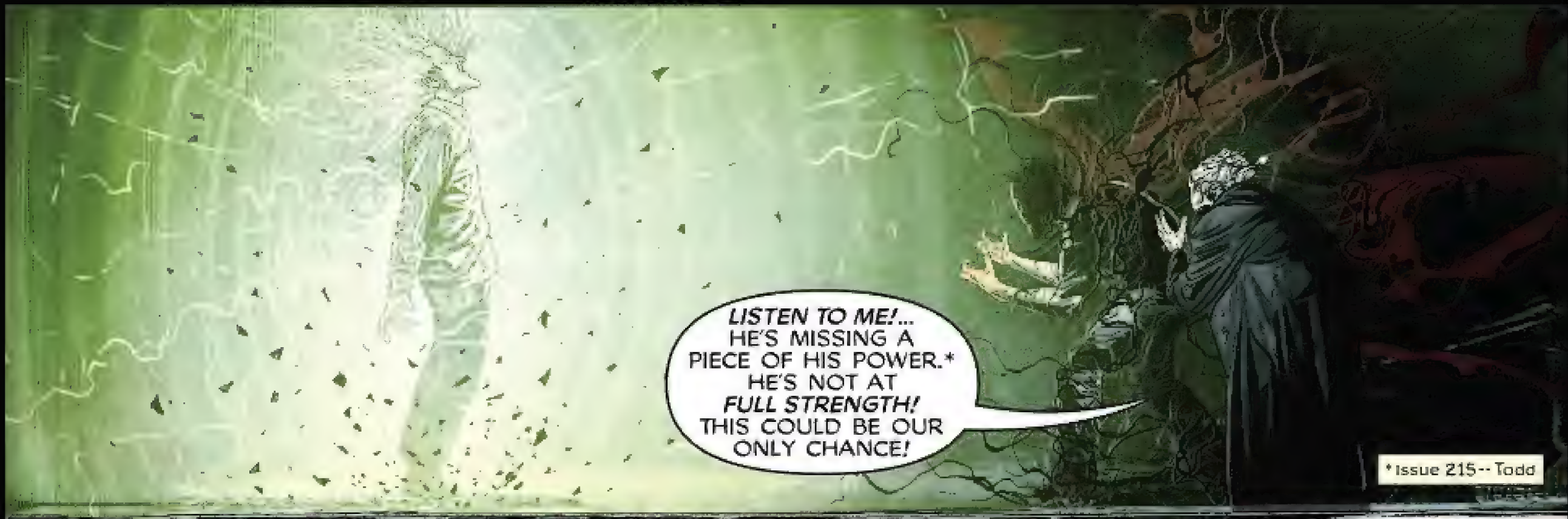


YOU'RE
BLUFFING.



TRY
ME.





LISTEN TO ME!...
HE'S MISSING A
PIECE OF HIS POWER.*
HE'S NOT AT
FULL STRENGTH!
THIS COULD BE OUR
ONLY CHANCE!

*Issue 215-- Todd



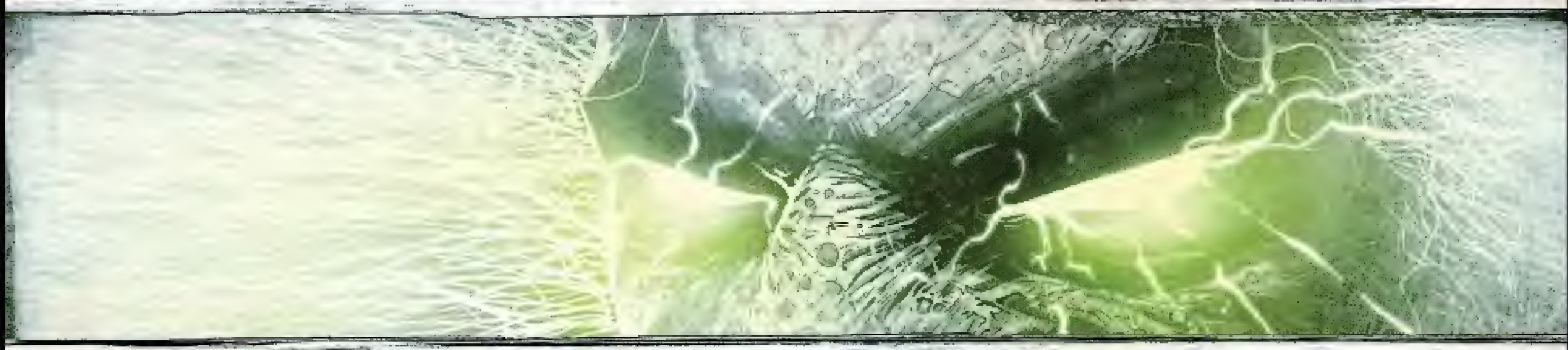
YOU'RE GOING
TO HAVE TO **TRUST ME**
ON THIS ONE! HE'S
TRYING TO GOAD YOU INTO
SOMETHING!



DON'T
LET HIM!



WE CAN
LOSE HIM...



IN THE
SHADOWS.





WHERE'RE
WE
HEADING?

DOESN'T
MATTER.



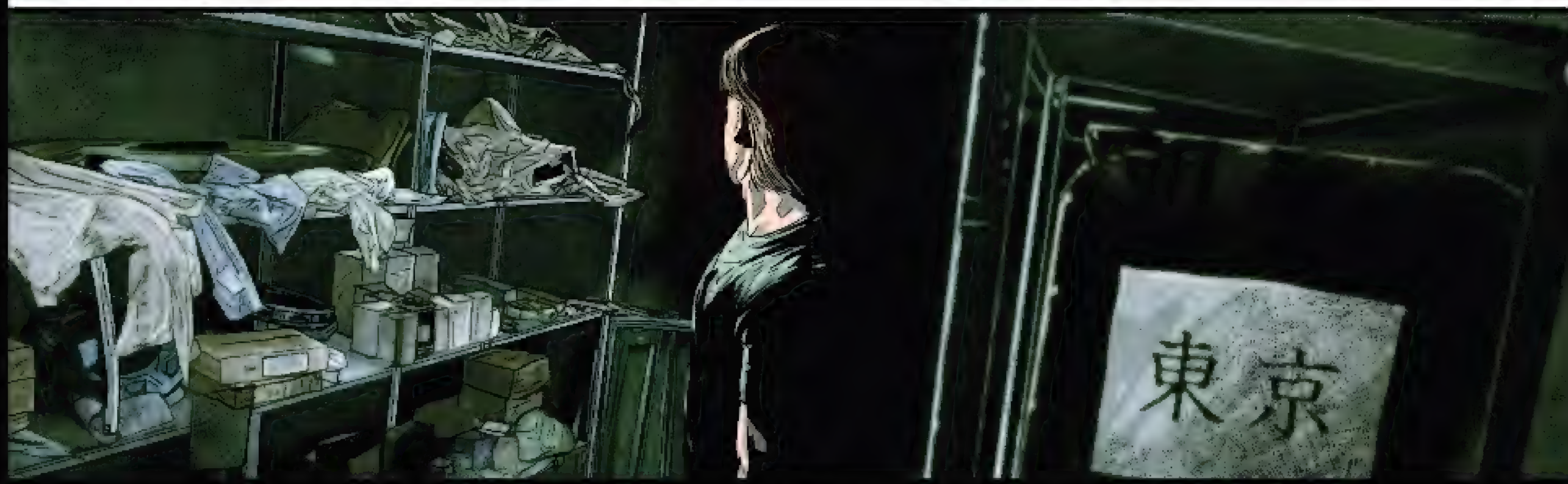
JUST KEEP
MOVING WITHIN
THE SHADOWS.
MALEBOLGIA CAN'T
SPAN THE DISTANCES
YOU AND YOUR
COSTUME CAN.

AND HE SURE
AS HELL CAN'T
TRACK *BOTH OF US*
AT ONCE-- NOT IF
WE SPLIT UP. HE'S
TOO WEAK.

SO YOU
NEED TO DO
ME A FAVOR--
NO MATTER WHAT
HAPPENS-- KEEP HIM
AWAY FROM ME FOR
TWENTY MINUTES.
THIS IS GOING TO
BE THE ONLY CHANCE
I'LL HAVE TO GET
WHAT I NEED.
CAN YOU DO
THAT?



SURE...





**WHERE
IS HE!?**



WHERE
ARE YOU
HIDING
CLOWN?

I DON'T
KNOW
WHAT YOU'RE...
TALKING
ABOUT.



WHAT DID
HE TELL YOU?
THAT I'M WEAK?
THAT I DON'T HAVE
THE POWER TO
CRUSH YOU
RIGHT HERE?

THAT I
COULDN'T
TRACK YOU
HERE TO JAPAN?
IS THAT WHAT
HE'S TELLING
YOU?



HERE...



LET ME
SHOW YOU
HOW FAST I TRAVEL
IN THE DARKNESS
AND HOW **UNAFRAID**
I AM OF BOTH OF
YOU!



I'LL EVEN
DO IT ON
YOUR **HOME**
TURF!



IN
THE SAME
GARBAGE
SIMMONS USED
TO CRAWL
IN!

Simmons...

IS
DEAD!!

KRASHH



YOU HAVE
TO DEAL WITH
ME NOW!



NO I DON'T.
BECAUSE I
ALREADY
CONTROL
YOU!

YOUR
COSTUME-- I
CREATED AND
OWN IT! NOT
YOU!



THAT'S WHY
IT WON'T HURT
ME. WHY IT WON'T
LISTEN TO YOUR
COMMANDS.

BECAUSE
IT KNOWS
WHO ITS **REAL**
MASTER IS!



AND AS
MUCH AS
YOU THINK
YOU'RE A
SPAWN...



Shinkkk



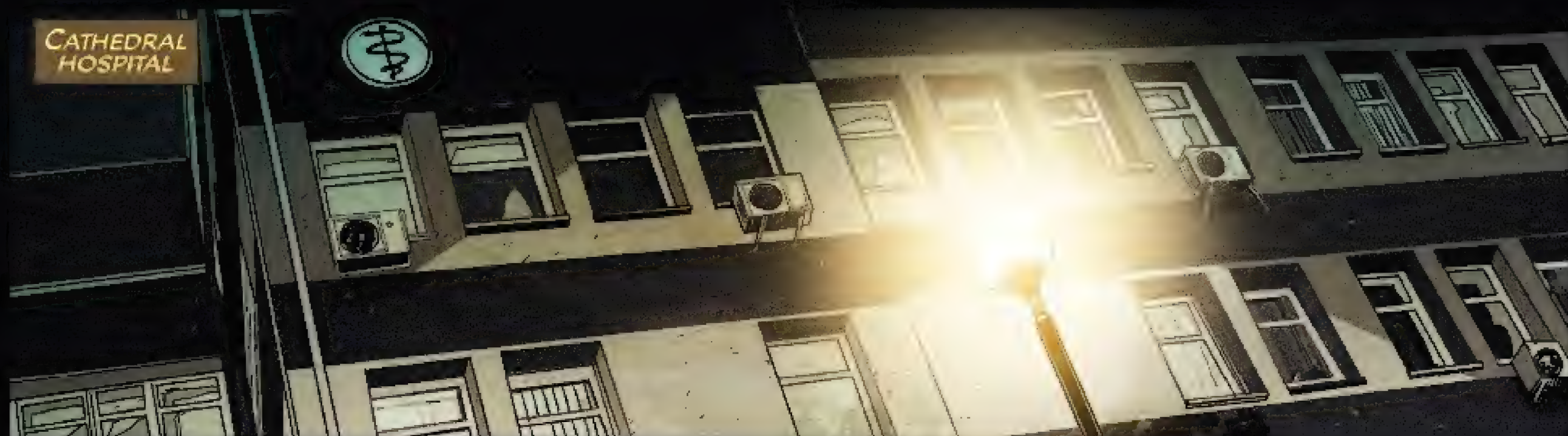
I'M THE
ONE THAT
CONTROLS
ITS
POWERS!



SO I'LL
ASK YOU
AGAIN...
**WHERE'S
CLOWN?**



YOU SEE,
HE TOOK
SOMETHING THAT
DIDN'T BELONG TO
HIM. BUT I GUESS
HE ALREADY TOLD
YOU THAT--
DIDN'T HE?





I WANT
TO THANK YOU
FOR PROTECTING
MY TREASURE.



BUT I
NEED IT
BACK
NOW.



ummpffff...!



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BEEEEP BEEEEP

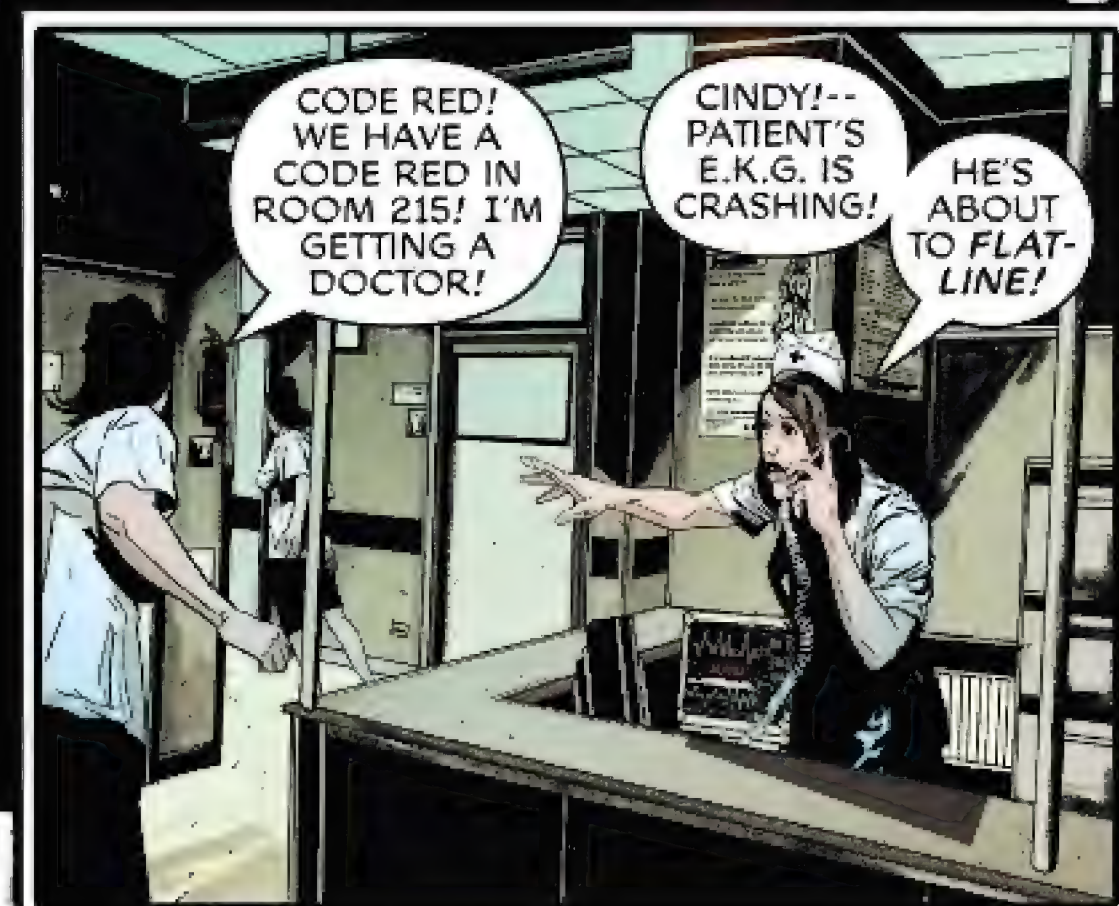
BEE

BEE

BEEEEP

ALARM

54



SHKAMM

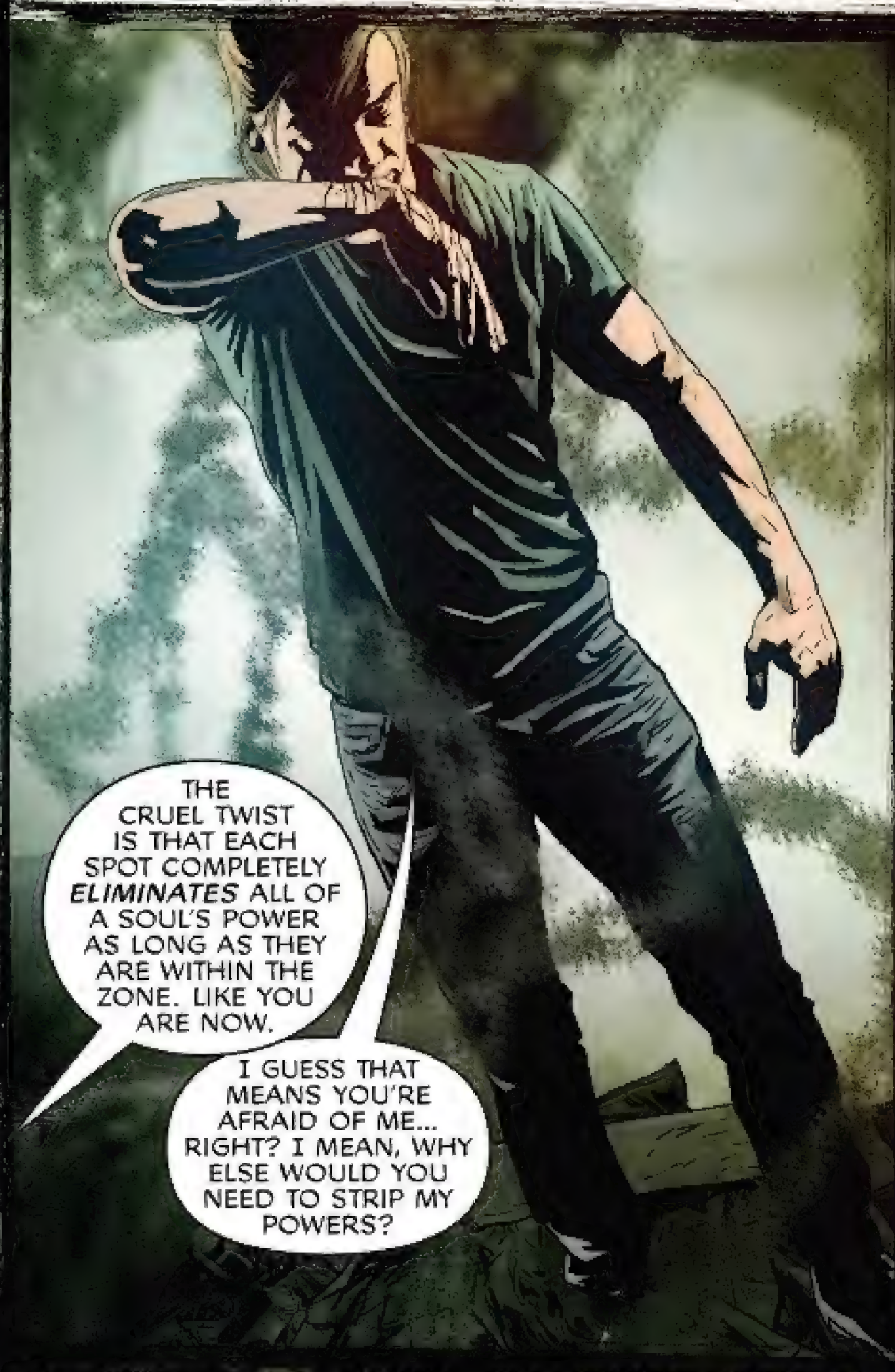
BEFORE GETTING UP-- YOU MAY WANT TO PAY ATTENTION TO HOW YOU LOOK.

WHAT'D YOU DO? TELL YOUR COSTUME TO HIDE?

NO. I DIDN'T HAVE TO.

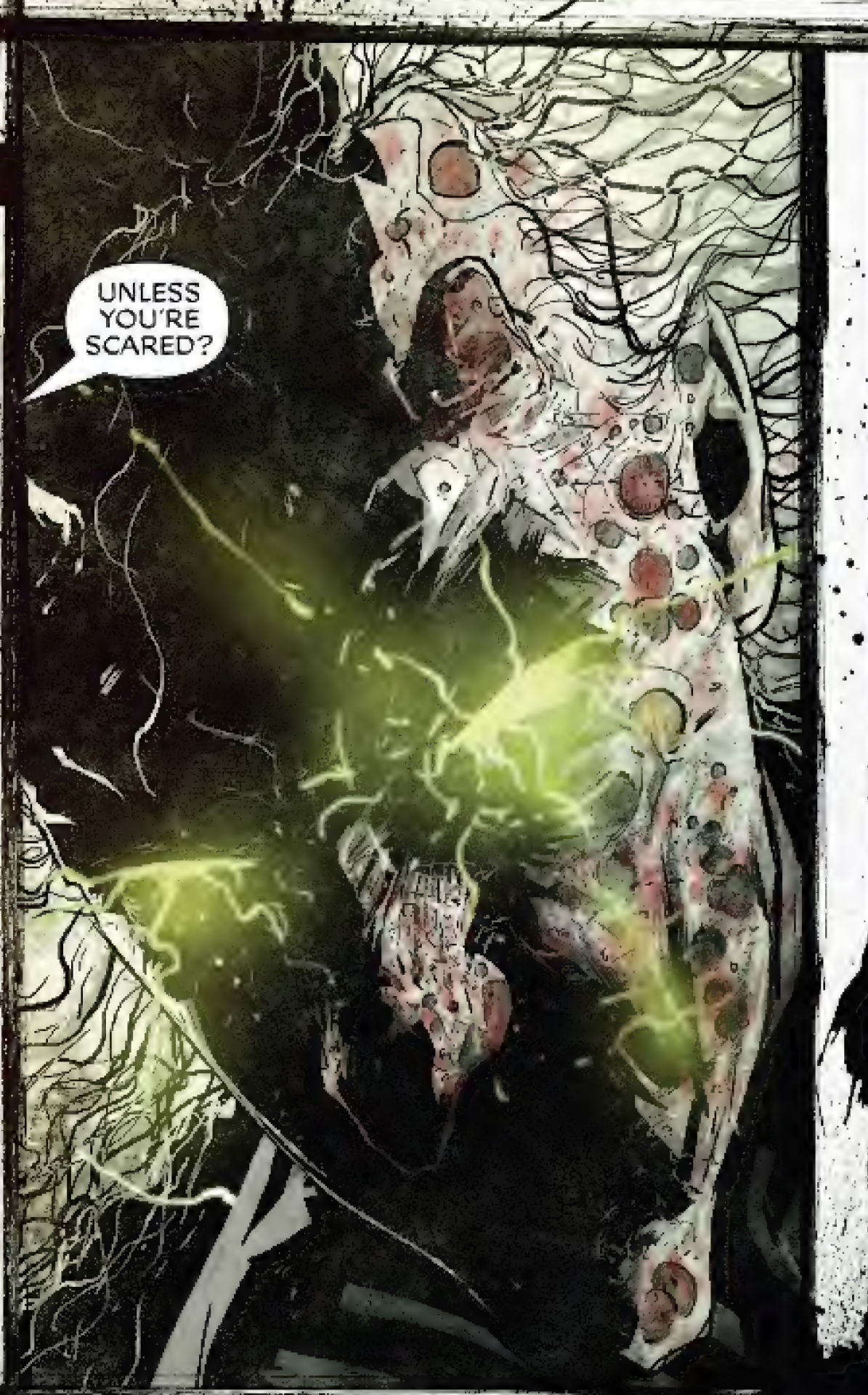
BUT YOU WOULDN'T KNOW THAT BECAUSE YOU'VE NO IDEA WHERE YOU ARE, DO YOU? WELL, LET ME ENLIGHTEN YOU-- IT'S CALLED THE *DEAD ZONE*. THERE'S A HANDFUL OF THEM. THEY'RE THE SPOTS WHERE GOD PLACES MY DEMONS AND MY SPAWNS BACK ON EARTH.

I GET THE SOUL, BUT HEAVEN CHOOSES THE DESTINATION. AND TO BALANCE IT ALL-- THE OPPOSITE OCCURS WITH HEAVEN'S SOULS-- I GET TO PLACE THEM WHEREVER I WANT, GLOBALLY.

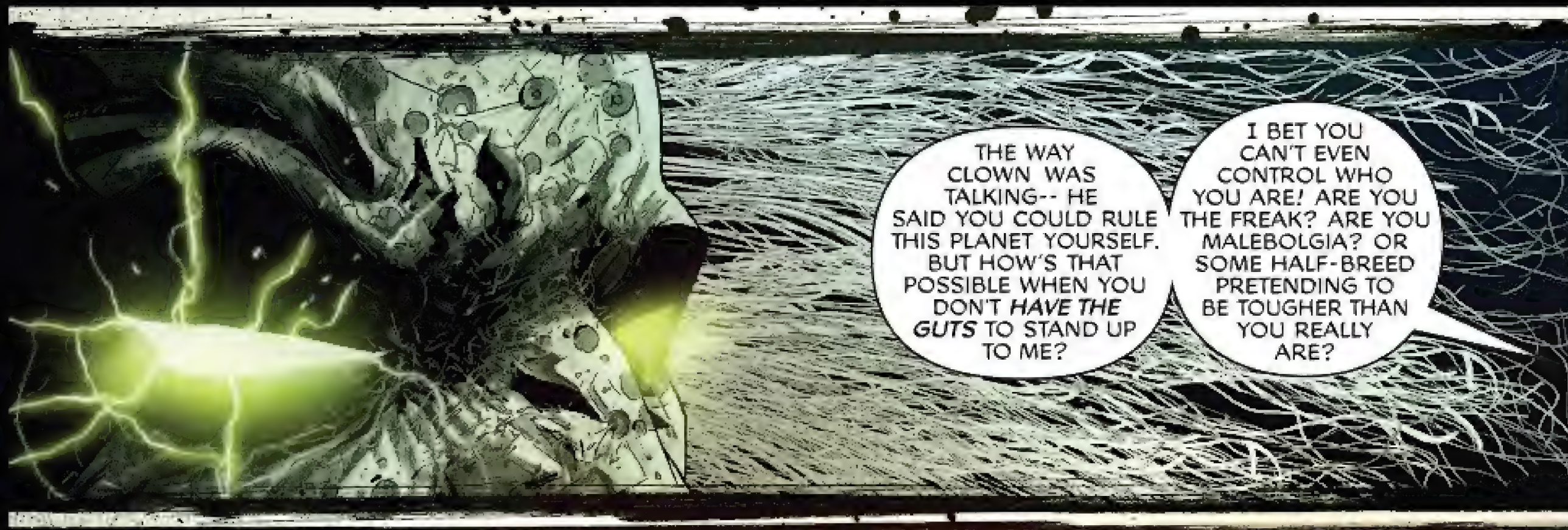


THE CRUEL TWIST IS THAT EACH SPOT COMPLETELY *ELIMINATES* ALL OF A SOUL'S POWER AS LONG AS THEY ARE WITHIN THE ZONE. LIKE YOU ARE NOW.

I GUESS THAT MEANS YOU'RE AFRAID OF ME... RIGHT? I MEAN, WHY ELSE WOULD YOU NEED TO STRIP MY POWERS?



UNLESS YOU'RE SCARED?



THE WAY CLOWN WAS TALKING-- HE SAID YOU COULD RULE THIS PLANET YOURSELF. BUT HOW'S THAT POSSIBLE WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE THE GUTS TO STAND UP TO ME?

I BET YOU CAN'T EVEN CONTROL WHO YOU ARE! ARE YOU THE FREAK? ARE YOU MALEBOLGIA? OR SOME HALF-BREED PRETENDING TO BE TOUGHER THAN YOU REALLY ARE?



SO WHAT'D'YA SAY? WHY DON'T YOU COME JOIN ME IN THIS 'DEAD ZONE' INSTEAD OF COWERING OUTSIDE IT?



THAT'S MY BIG GIRL!



TELL ME THE TRUTH!



YOU DON'T CONTROL ANYTHING! DO YOU? ESPECIALLY THE COSTUME!

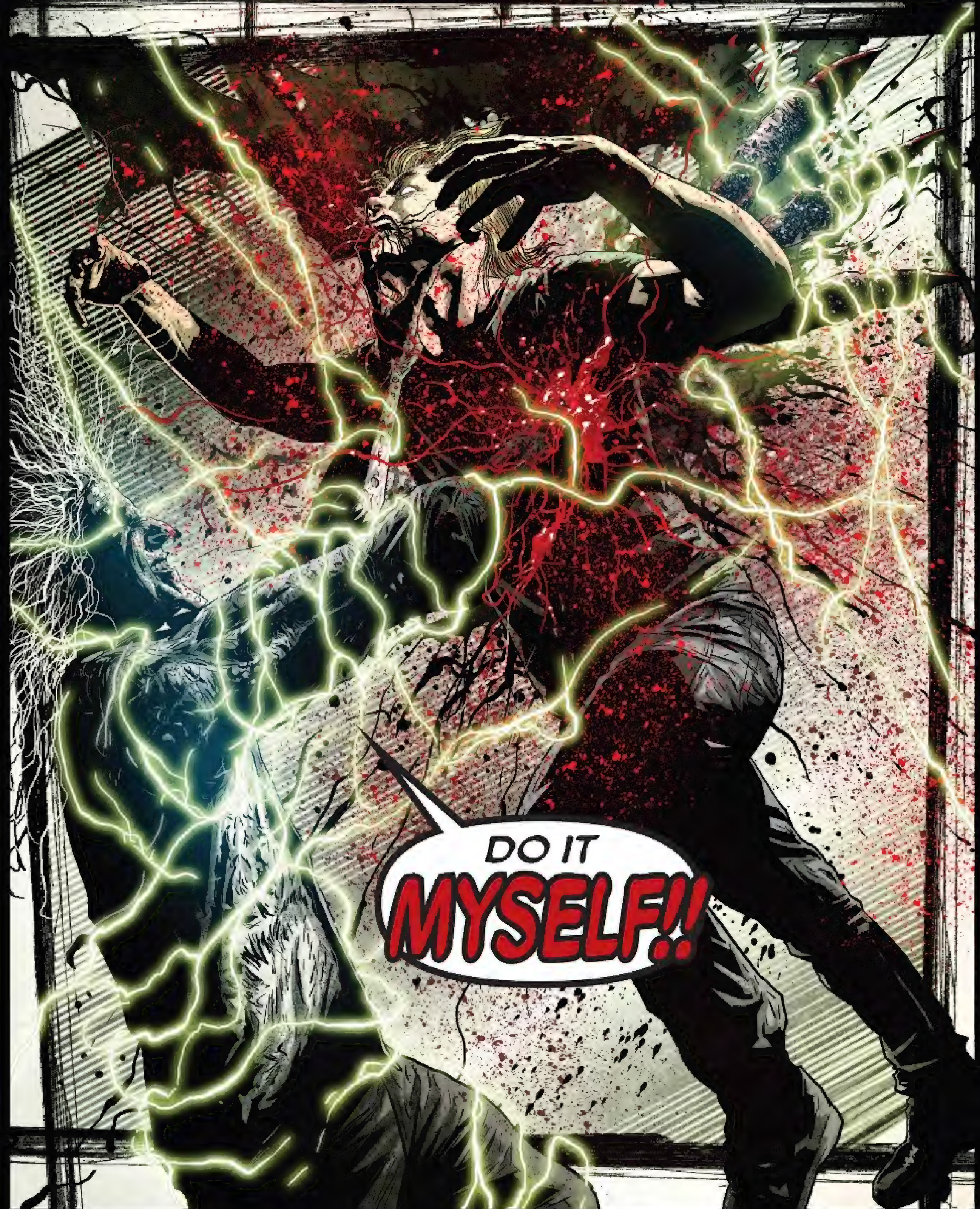
IF YOU DID, YOU'D HAVE MADE IT ATTACK ME!



OR SUFFOCATE
ME? OR STRANGLE
ME? ANYTHING!



THAT'S
BECAUSE I
WANTED TO...



DO IT
MYSELF!!

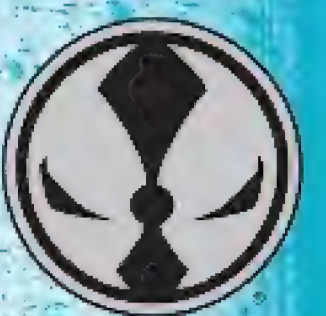




...WE
AREN'T
DONE
YET!



**NEXT: WINGS OF
REDEMPTION**



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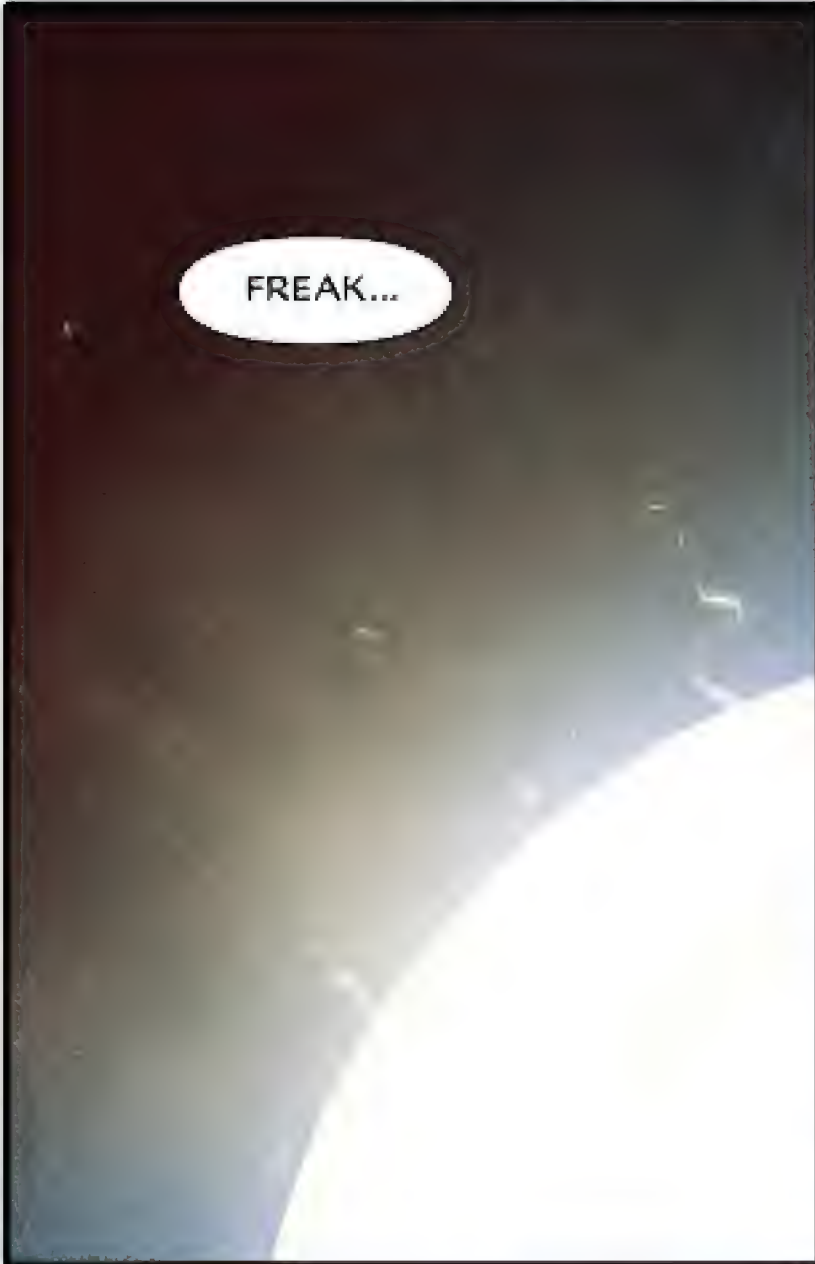
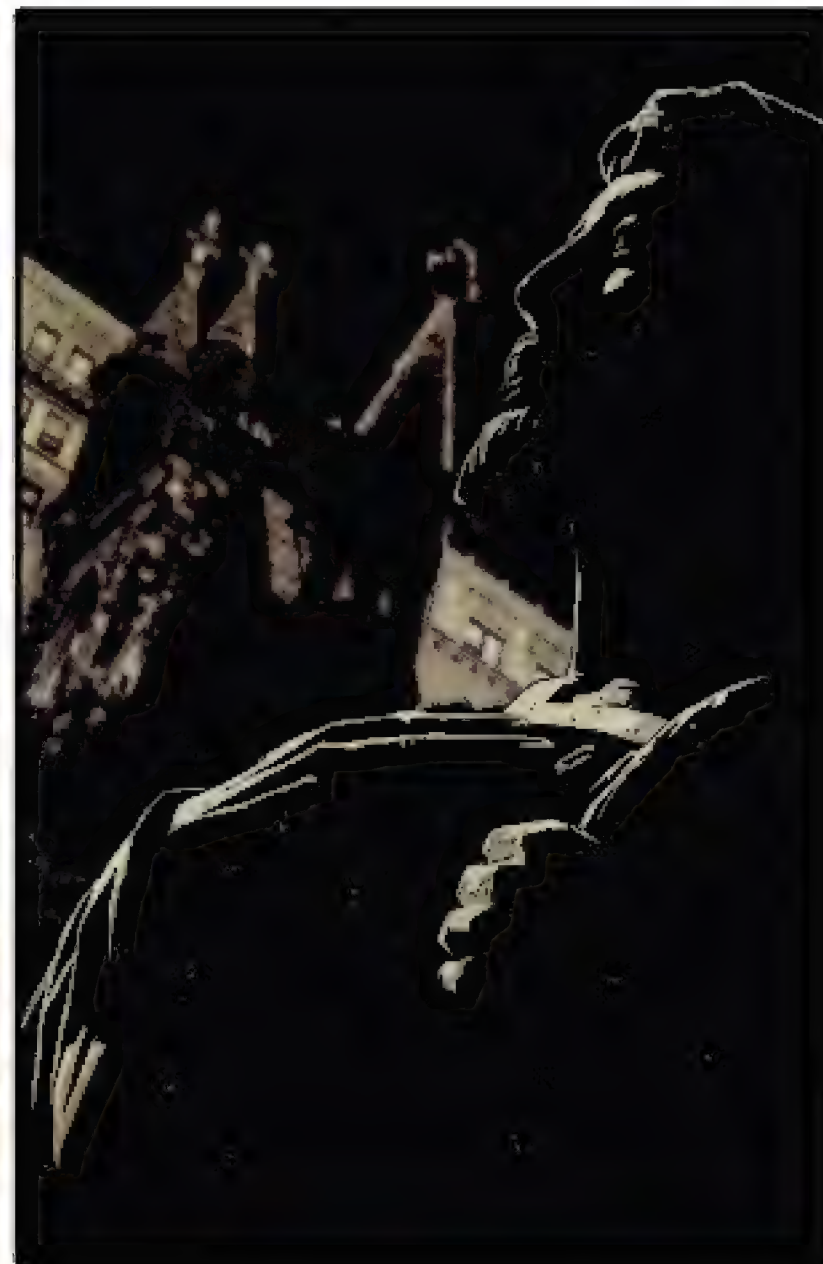
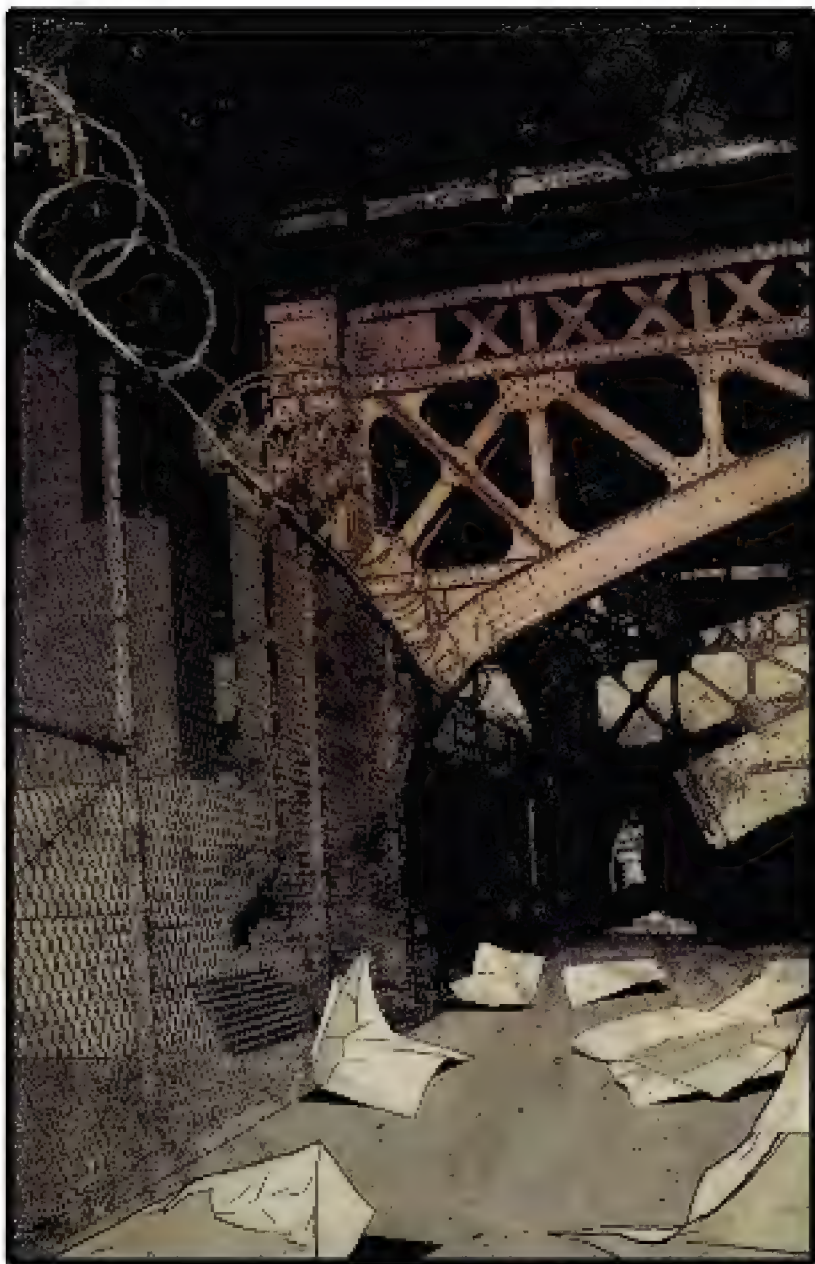
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DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN



Golden
McFarlane





IN
FACT--

I'M JUST
GETTING
**WARMED
UP!**



GOOD!
I DIDN'T WANT
YOU DYING SO
EASILY.*

*See last issue--Todd

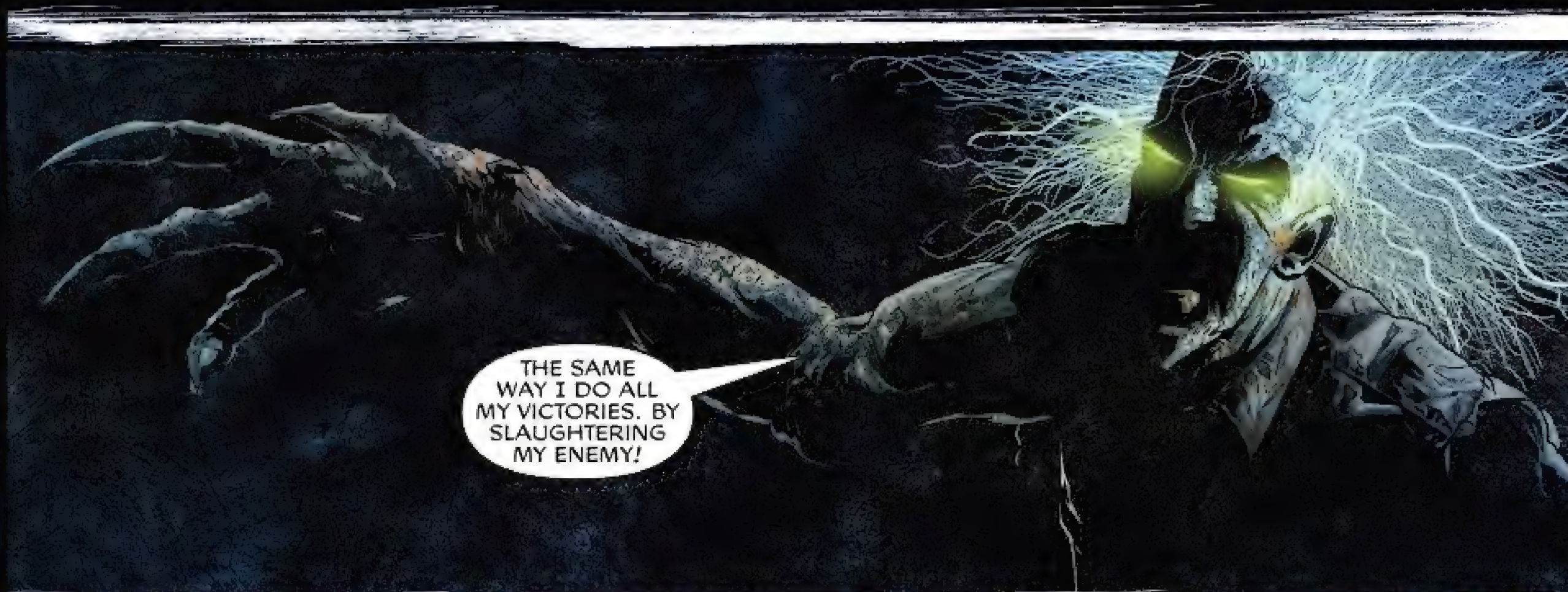


DYING SEEMS TO BE **NEAR** IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME. BUT YOU ALREADY KNEW THAT.

AND YOU ALSO KNEW YOU WERE **NEVER** GOING TO CONTROL ME! I CAN FEEL YOUR PANIC FROM HERE!

SO...

...HOW DO YOU WANT TO END THIS?



THE SAME WAY I DO ALL MY VICTORIES. BY SLAUGHTERING MY ENEMY!



THAT'S YOUR BEST THREAT?

NO!

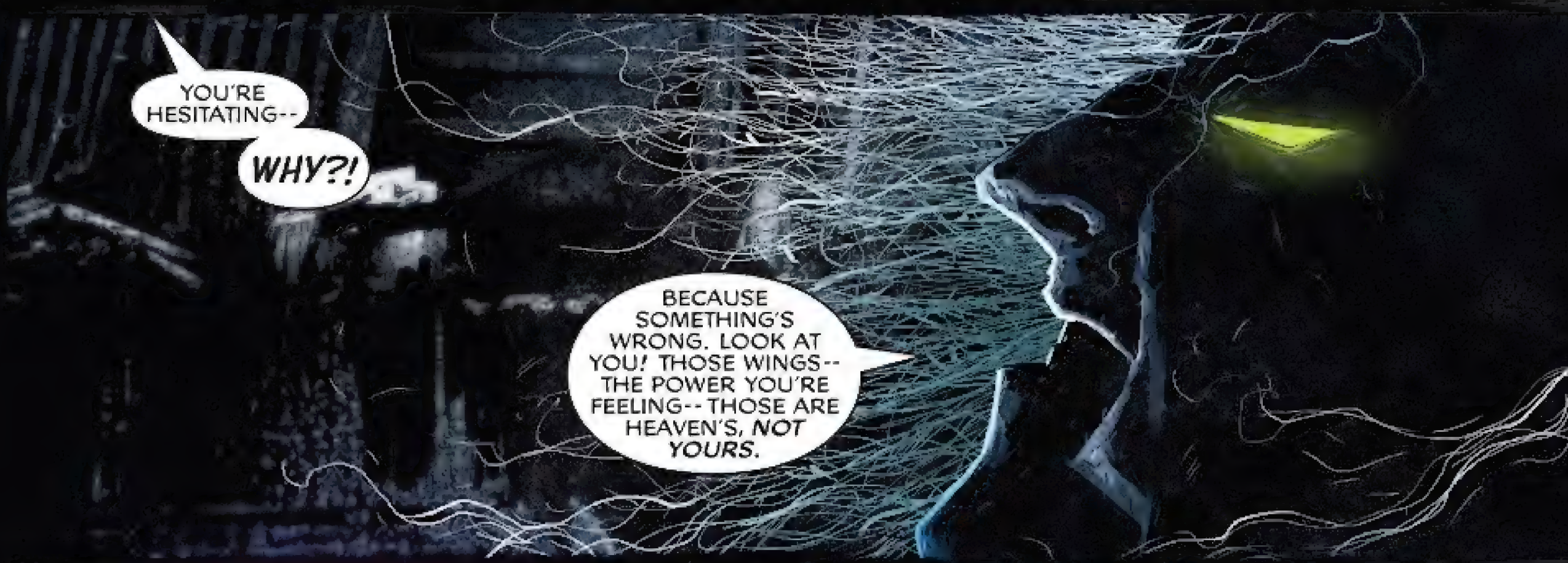
BUT YOUR ARROGANCE IS BLINDING YOU TO THE HARSH REALITY THAT YOUR POWERS ARE **FLEETING!** THEY WON'T LAST!



THEN **DO SOMETHING** ABOUT IT!



STOP
TALKING!
GO AHEAD--
TAKE YOUR
BEST SHOT!



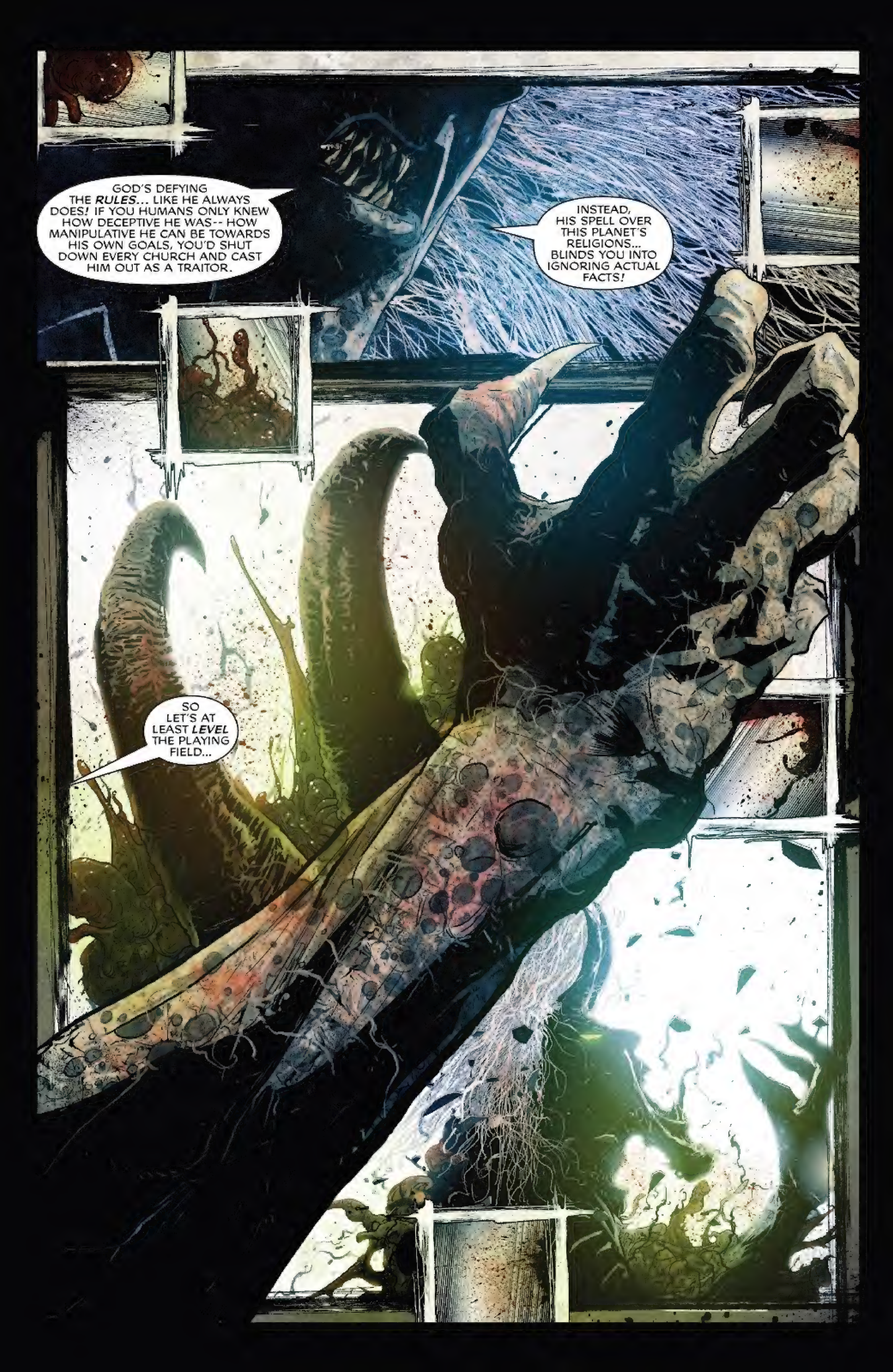
YOU'RE
HESITATING--

WHY?!

BECAUSE
SOMETHING'S
WRONG. LOOK AT
YOU! THOSE WINGS--
THE POWER YOU'RE
FEELING-- THOSE ARE
HEAVEN'S, NOT
YOURS.



I'VE SEEN ANGELS
A THOUSAND TIMES.
AND I'VE DESTROYED
EVERY ONE OF THEM!
BUT NONE OF THEM
RETAINED THEIR WINGS
WHILE STANDING IN A
'DEAD ZONE'.



GOD'S DEFYING
THE RULES... LIKE HE ALWAYS
DOES! IF YOU HUMANS ONLY KNEW
HOW DECEPTIVE HE WAS-- HOW
MANIPULATIVE HE CAN BE TOWARDS
HIS OWN GOALS, YOU'D SHUT
DOWN EVERY CHURCH AND CAST
HIM OUT AS A TRAITOR.

INSTEAD,
HIS SPELL OVER
THIS PLANET'S
RELIGIONS...
BLINDS YOU INTO
IGNORING ACTUAL
FACTS!

SO
LET'S AT
LEAST LEVEL
THE PLAYING
FIELD...



...AND SEE IF
WHATEVER IS GIVING
YOU YOUR POWERS
APPLIES TO THE
REST OF US!

BECAUSE I
DON'T WANT TO THINK
GOD IS SELFISH ENOUGH
TO COMPLETELY DEFEY ALL
OF OUR AGREED TO
PROVISIONS.



FOR IT'S
BEEN WRITTEN THAT
"WHATEVER GIFTS SHALL
BE GIVEN TO THE LORD'S
CHILDREN, SHALL ALSO
BENEFIT THE CHILDREN OF
DARKNESS AND THEIR
MASTERS."



MEANING
THIS 'DEAD
ZONE' SHOULD
STRENGTHEN
ME TOO.



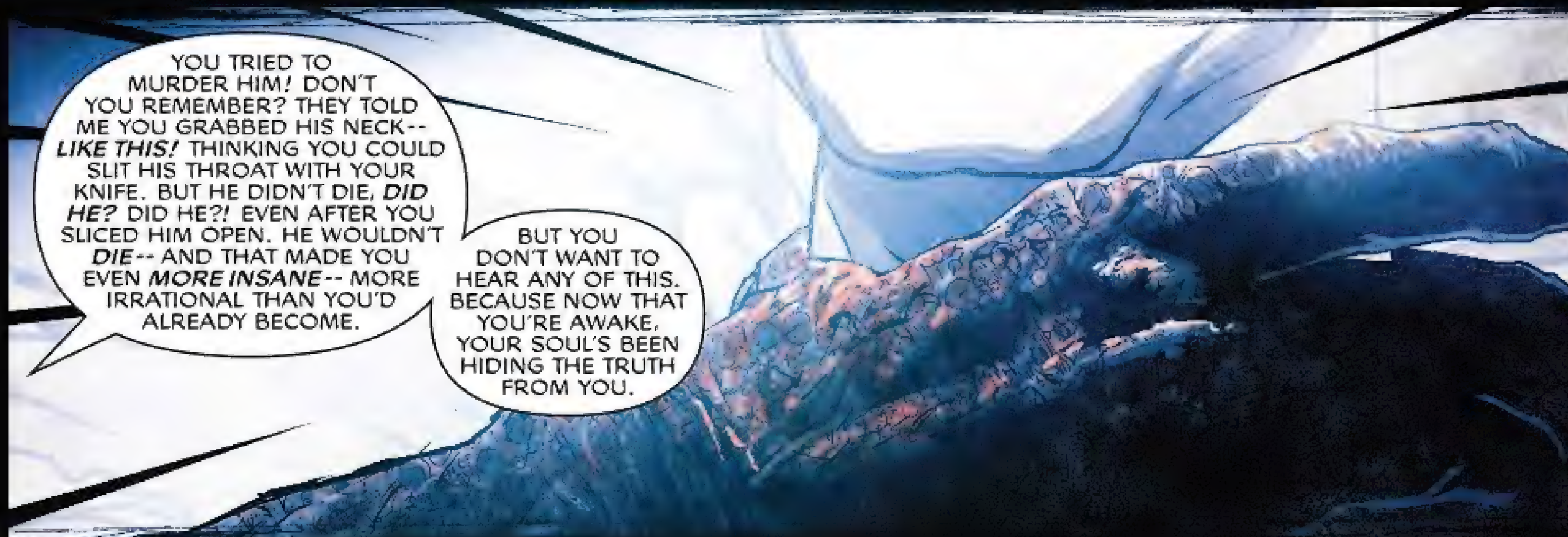




NOW BEFORE I
KILL YOU-- ANSWER ME
SOMETHING. WHAT DID
YOU MEAN WHEN YOU
SAID "GOD'S CHILDREN?"
WHY'D YOU RECITE
THAT PHRASE?

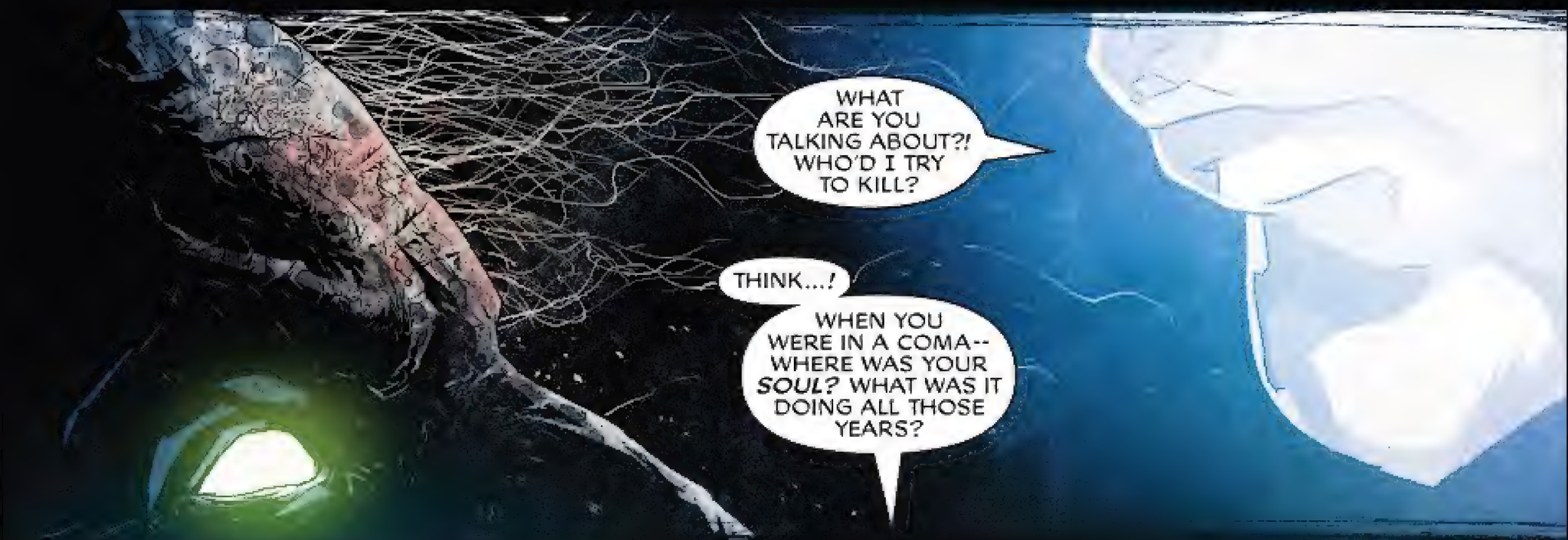
BECAUSE
I NOW RECOGNIZE
WHO YOU ARE. AND
YOU'RE RIGHT... I DIDN'T
CREATE YOU. BUT THOSE
THAT DID KNEW THEY
MADE A MISTAKE. KNEW
YOU COULDN'T BE
TRUSTED.

THAT'S WHY
THEY **BANISHED**
YOU! WHY THEY
THREW YOU **OUT**
OF HEAVEN!



YOU TRIED TO MURDER HIM! DON'T YOU REMEMBER? THEY TOLD ME YOU GRABBED HIS NECK-- *LIKE THIS!* THINKING YOU COULD SLIT HIS THROAT WITH YOUR KNIFE. BUT HE DIDN'T DIE, *DID HE?* DID HE?! EVEN AFTER YOU SLICED HIM OPEN. HE WOULDN'T *DIE*-- AND THAT MADE YOU EVEN *MORE INSANE*-- MORE IRRATIONAL THAN YOU'D ALREADY BECOME.

BUT YOU DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANY OF THIS. BECAUSE NOW THAT YOU'RE AWAKE, YOUR SOUL'S BEEN HIDING THE TRUTH FROM YOU.



WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?! WHO'D I TRY TO KILL?

THINK...!

WHEN YOU WERE IN A COMA-- WHERE WAS YOUR *SOUL*? WHAT WAS IT DOING ALL THOSE YEARS?



AND WHEN THE TIME CAME, YOU TRIED TO MURDER

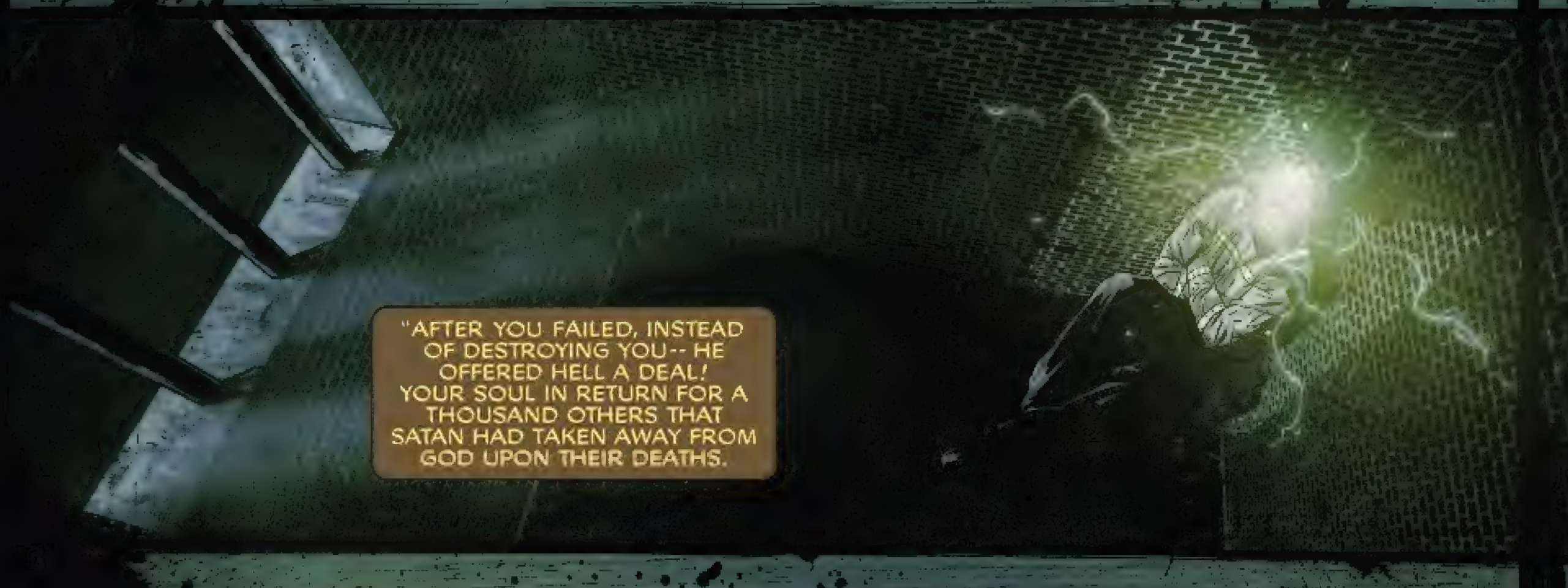
GOD!

IT WAS PLANNING. SCHEMING!



"BUT YOU
FAILED! YOU
KNOW WHY?"

"BECAUSE HE'S A *GOD*!
YOU CAN'T KILL US THAT WAY!
THAT'S NOT HOW IT WORKS!
WE LORD OVER YOU-- WE HAVE
THE POWER! *NOT YOU!*"



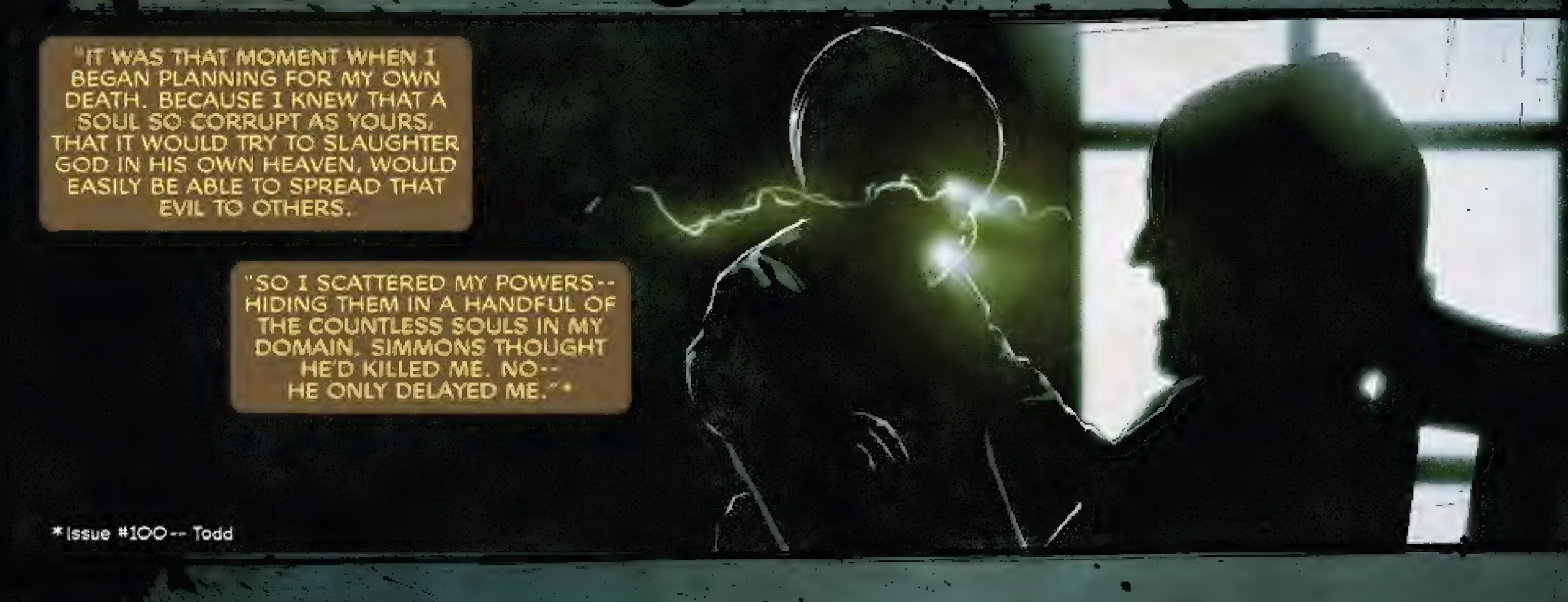
"AFTER YOU FAILED, INSTEAD
OF DESTROYING YOU-- HE
OFFERED HELL A DEAL!
YOUR SOUL IN RETURN FOR A
THOUSAND OTHERS THAT
SATAN HAD TAKEN AWAY FROM
GOD UPON THEIR DEATHS."

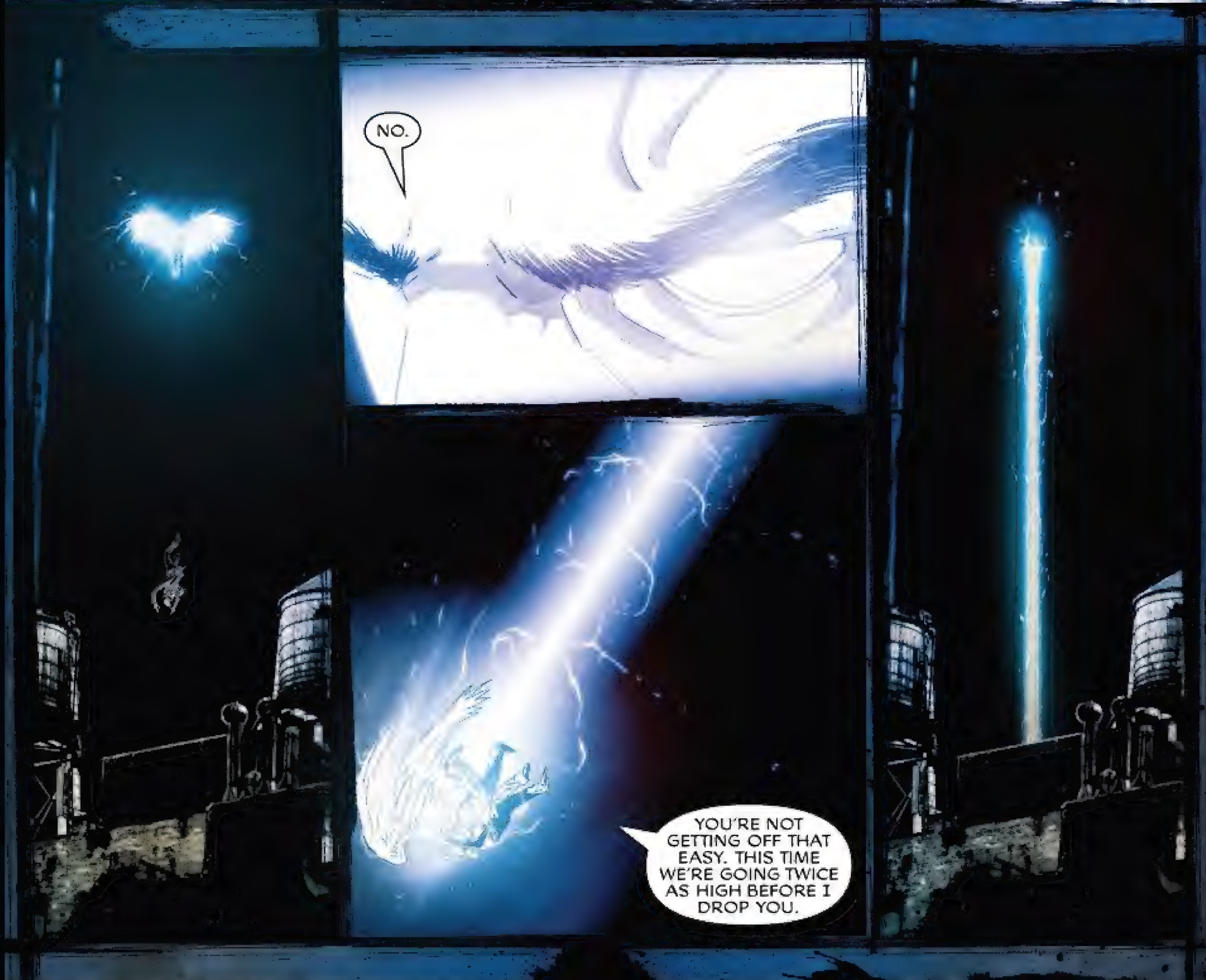


"AND THOUGH
YOU DON'T LOOK
THE SAME AS
YOU DID THEN...
I REMEMBER
SEEING YOU AND
HOW, FOR A
BRIEF MOMENT,
YOU MADE EYE
CONTACT WITH
THE SOUL OF AL
SIMMONS."

"IT WAS THAT MOMENT WHEN I
BEGAN PLANNING FOR MY OWN
DEATH. BECAUSE I KNEW THAT A
SOUL SO CORRUPT AS YOURS,
THAT IT WOULD TRY TO SLAUGHTER
GOD IN HIS OWN HEAVEN, WOULD
EASILY BE ABLE TO SPREAD THAT
EVIL TO OTHERS."

"SO I SCATTERED MY POWERS--
HIDING THEM IN A HANDFUL OF
THE COUNTLESS SOULS IN MY
DOMAIN. SIMMONS THOUGHT
HE'D KILLED ME. NO--
HE ONLY DELAYED ME."*







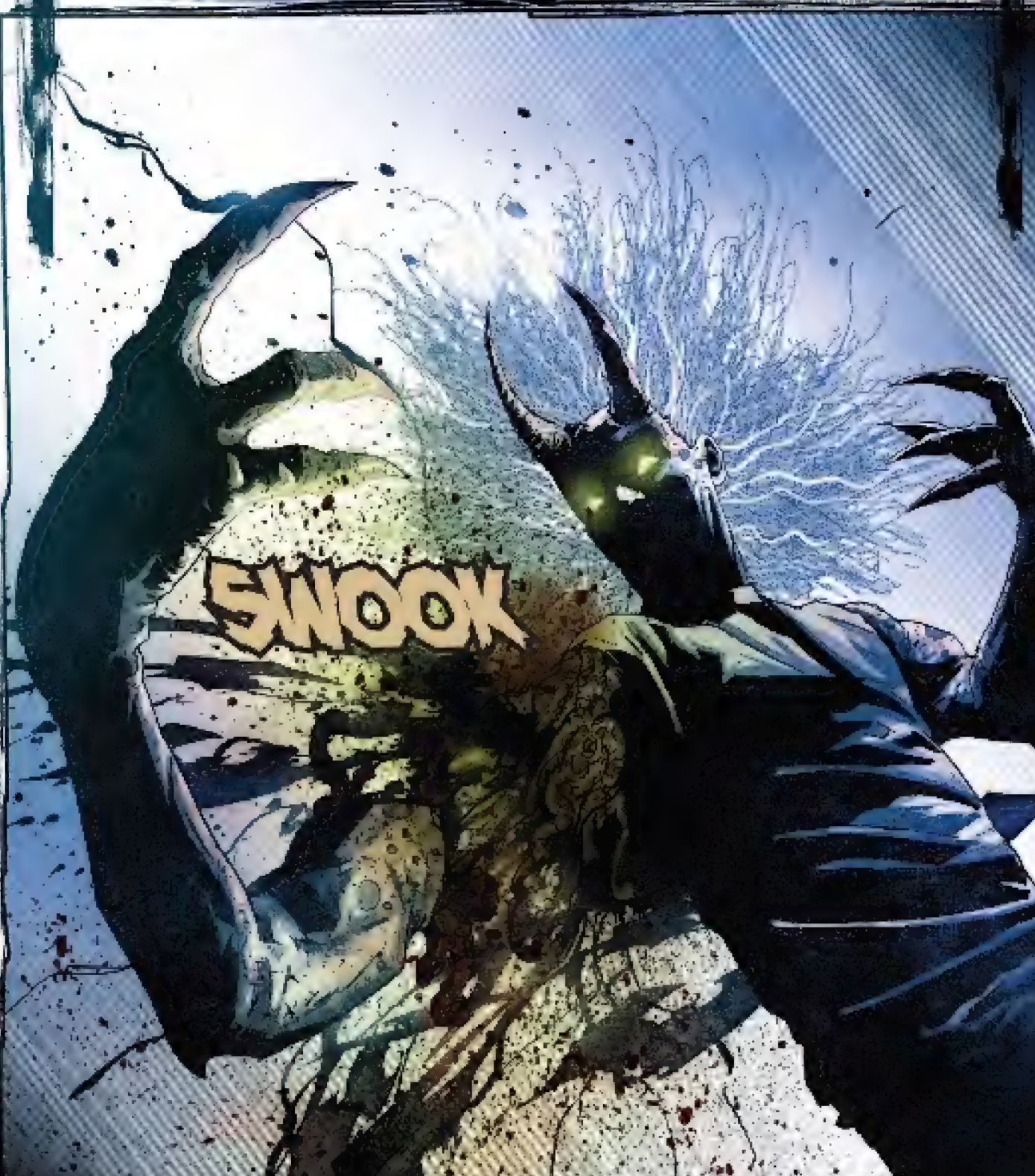
I WANT
IT TO
REALLY
HURT!



ARE YOU
INSANE?!



YOU BRING
THIS KIND OF ATTENTION
TO YOURSELF -- THE
HUMANS WILL HUNT
YOU DOWN!





NO THEY
WON'T! BECAUSE
THEY DON'T KNOW
WE'RE HERE. THEY
CAN'T SEE OUR
POWERS!



CLOWN TOLD ME
ANYTHING COMING FROM
THE "DEAD ZONE" IS INVISIBLE
TO MANKIND... SO STOP WITH
THE SCARE TACTICS. IT'S
BENEATH YOU!

WHICH TELLS
ME EVERYTHING I NEED
TO KNOW ABOUT YOU AND
YOUR CURRENT CONDITION.
CLOWN SAID YOU HAD THE
POWER TO CONQUER EARTH--
BUT IF YOU DID, YOU'D HAVE USED
IT BY NOW! YOU'RE WEAK! THAT
MEANS YOU'RE F**KED!
SO LET ME DO A LITTLE
TALKING HERE...



THIS COSTUME
YOU CREATED-- IT HATES
YOU! IT HATES YOU SO MUCH
THAT SOMEHOW IT'S TRYING TO
TELL ME HOW TO KILL YOU! YOU
UNDERSTAND THAT? YOUR OWN
CREATION WANTS TO KILL YOU!
AND IF WHAT YOU'RE TELLING
ME HAS ANY TRUTH TO IT--
THEN THINK WHAT THAT
COMBO MEANS!

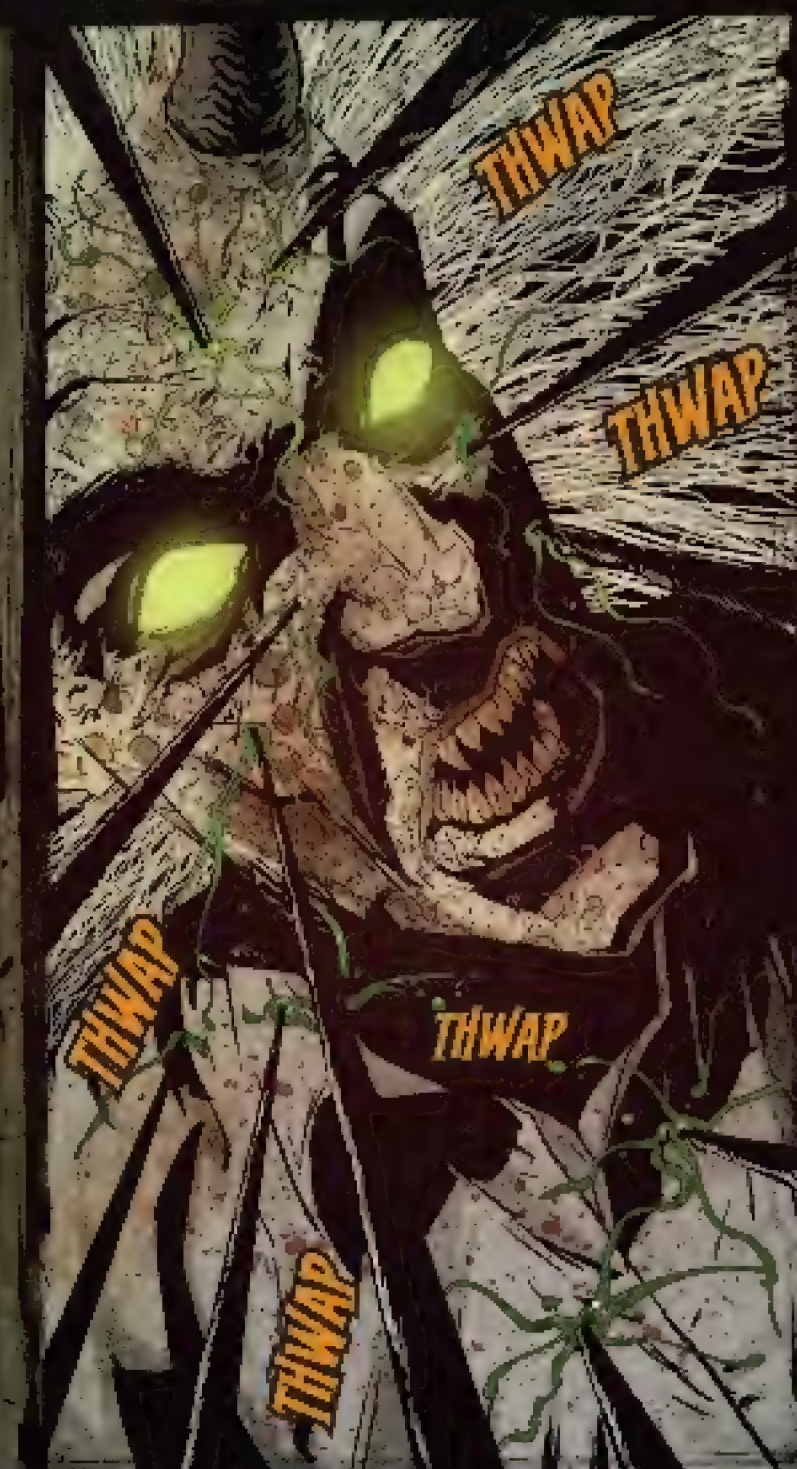
I TRIED TO
KILL GOD AND YOUR
COSTUME WANTS TO KILL
YOU! TOGETHER WE DON'T
GIVE A SHIT ABOUT EITHER
HEAVEN OR HELL-- WE'RE
HERE TO PROTECT
EARTH!



AND
NOW I KNOW
HOW TO DO IT!
BECAUSE THE
COSTUME KNOWS
YOUR SECRETS!



AND IT WANTS
REVENGE!!



YOU'RE A
FOOL,
DOWNING...!

DOWNING'S
GONE! I SENT HIM
AWAY! IT'S JUST
ME NOW... YOUR
SYMBIOTE!

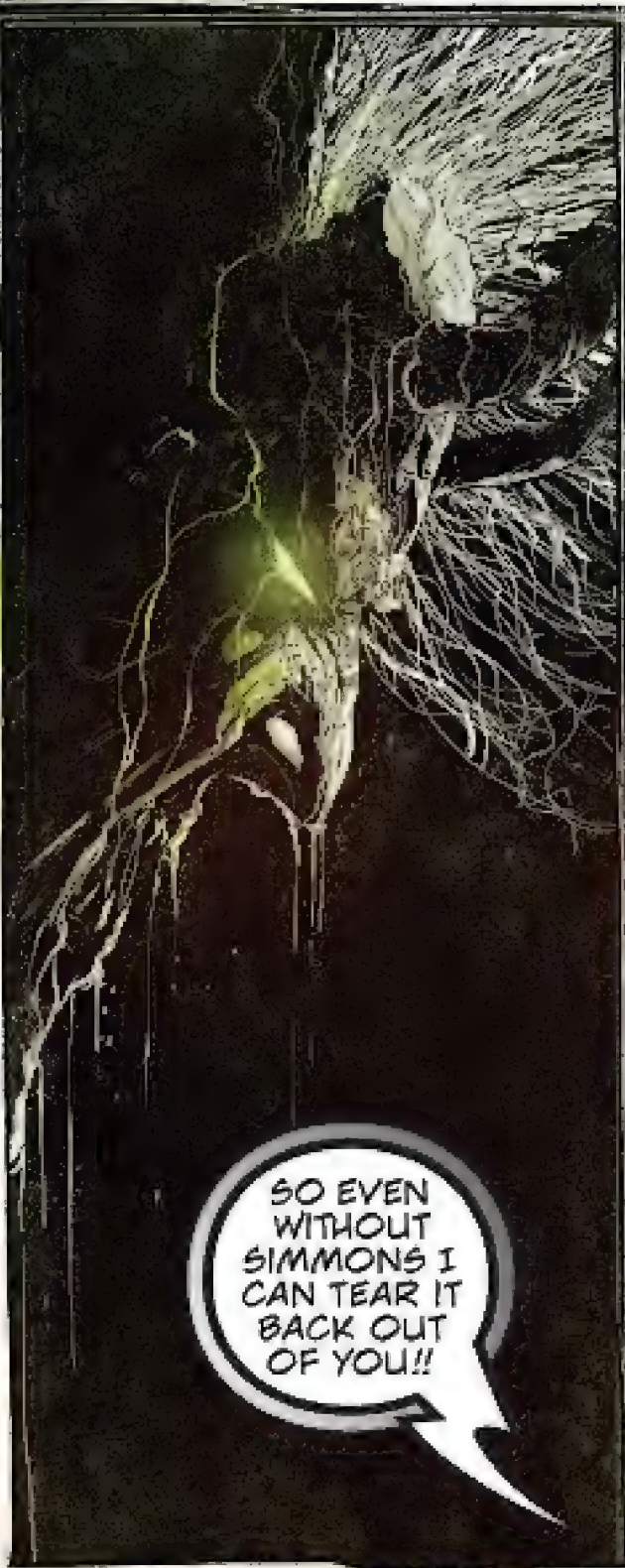


AND I
KNOW
HOW TO
EXTRACT
YOU FROM
THAT
BODY.



REMEMBER--
I WAS THE ONE
THAT PUT YOUR
EVIL INSIDE THE
FREAK!*

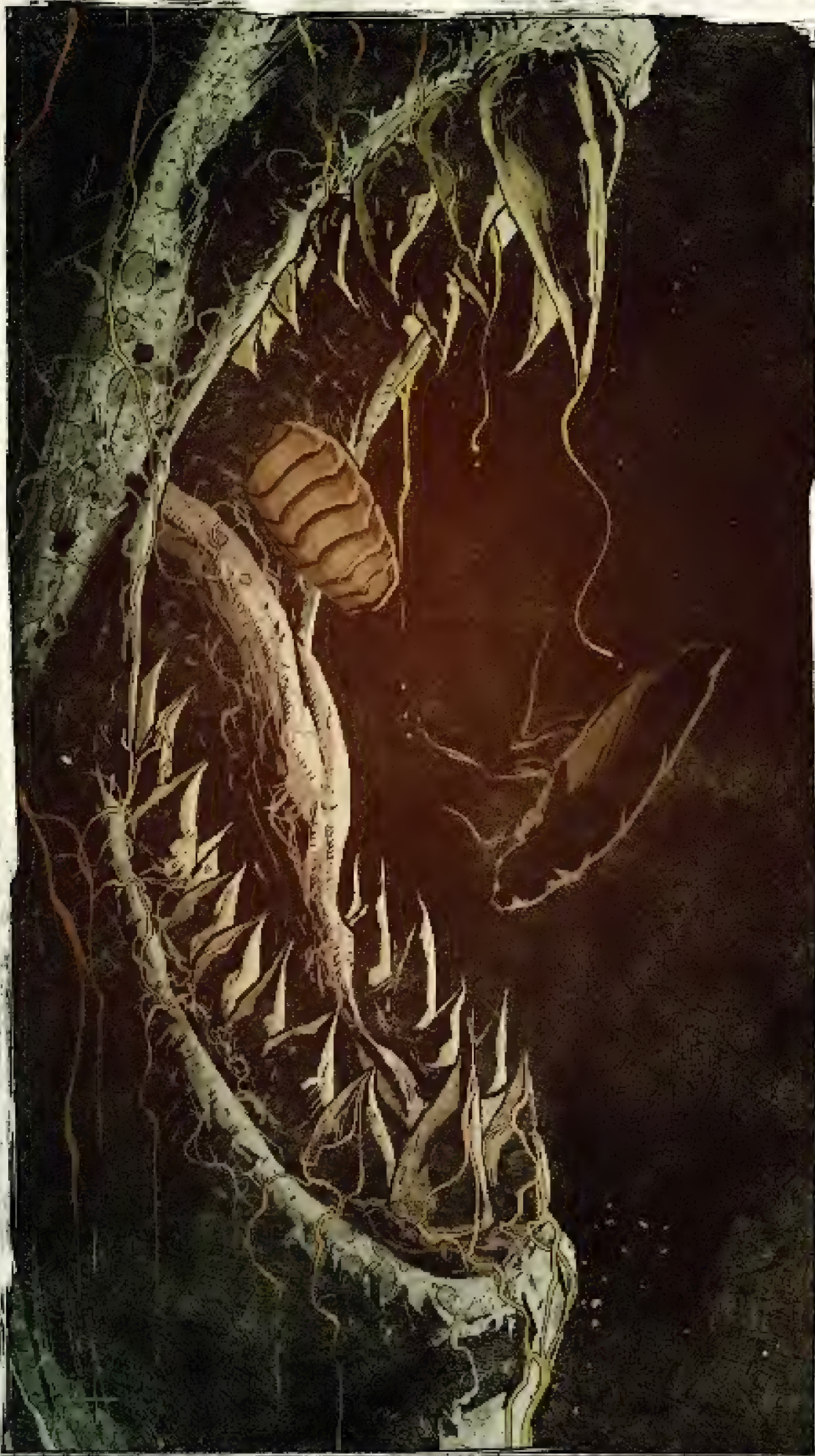
* Issue #73-- Todd



SO EVEN
WITHOUT
SIMMONS I
CAN TEAR IT
BACK OUT
OF YOU!!



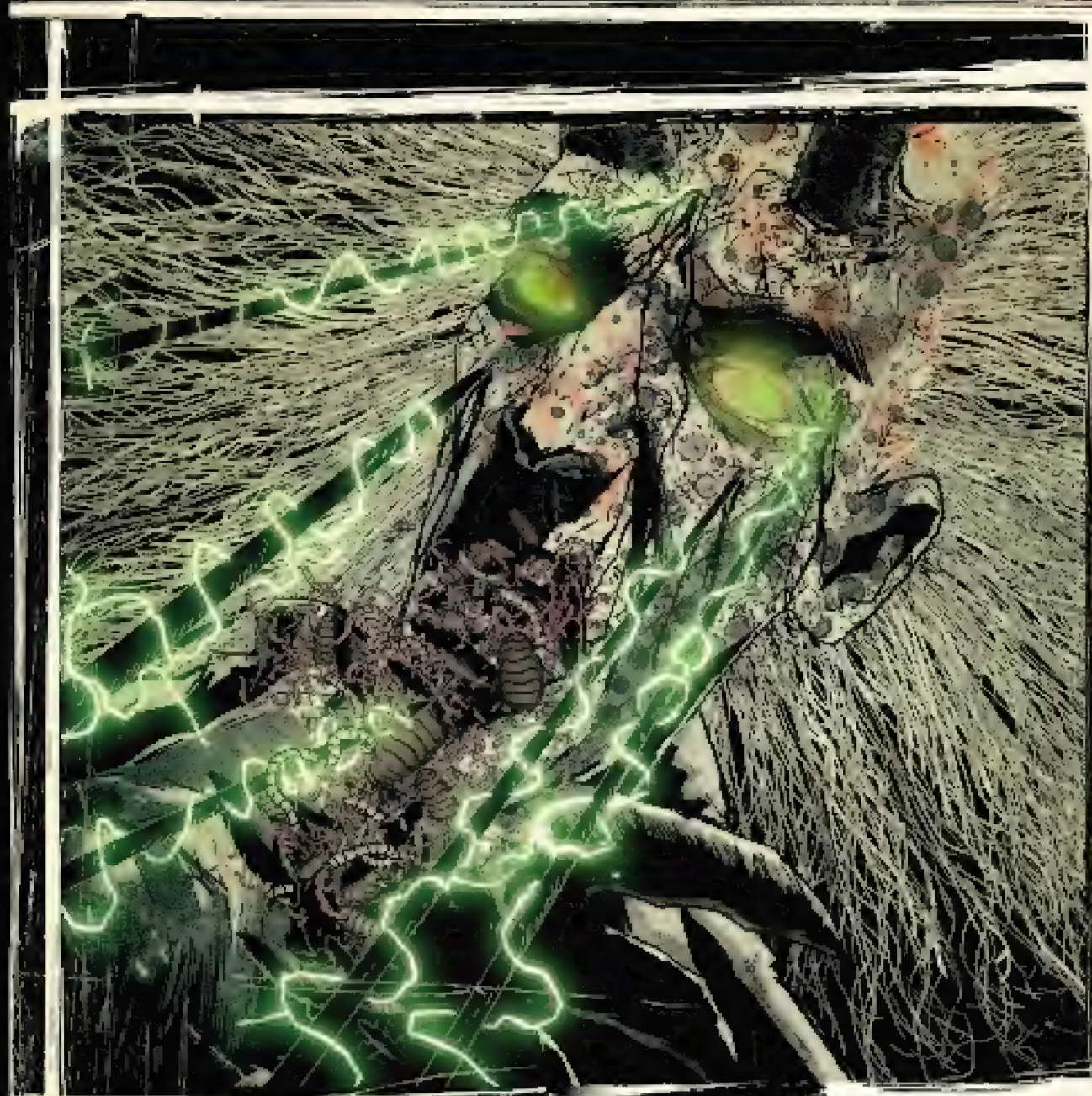
LIKE
THIS!





I SENT
FREAK TO HELL! NOT
YOU!! YOU DID NOTHING TO
GET HIM THERE! THAT MAKES
ME HIS MASTER!! YOUR MISTAKE
WAS NOT FINDING OUT HOW HIS
SOUL GOT TO YOU BEFORE USING
IT. BUT TONIGHT IT ENDS!!
THIS ALL ENDS!!

YOU
AREN'T
GOING TO
RULE THIS
WORLD!



AND
NEITHER IS
CLOWN!



IT'S
MINE!!
UNDER-
STAND?
THIS WORLD
WILL BE
MINE!



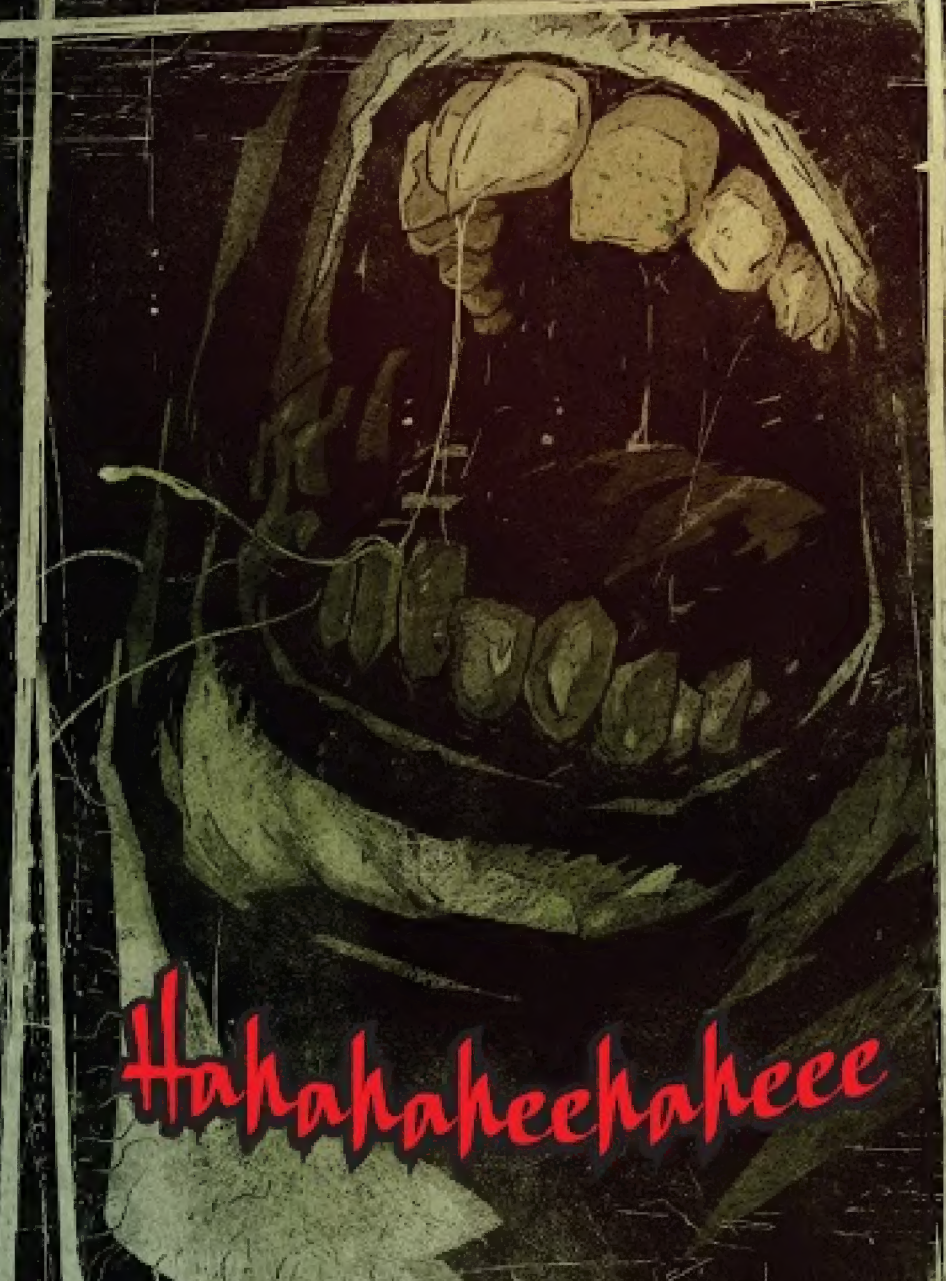
DOWNING
IS JUST A
MEANS TO
GET THERE.

WHOMP



AND HIS
SOUL HOLDS
THE KEY TO
GETTING INTO
HEAVEN.

THAT'S
WHERE I'LL
GET CLOSE
ENOUGH TO
GOD-- TO
ASSASSINATE
HIM!



THAT'S FUNNY...
KILL GOD... NOT...
heheeeehaaheeee...
NOT YOU... THAT'S
CRAZY...



AND IF
YOU DID IT...
YOU KNOW
WHAT'LL HAPPEN?
YOU KNOW
WHO'LL COME
BACK...

Hahahahaheee



SIMMONS.

IT'S
SIMMONS.

AND
HE'LL COME...
LOOKING FOR
YOU.

heheeeehheeeeee





THEN LET
HIM COME!

LET THEM
ALL COME!
BECAUSE--NO ONE
IS GOING TO STOP
THIS SPAWN
EVER AGAIN!!

TO BE CONTINUED...

